

THE IDEAL PARENTS

By the same Author:

THE GUIDANCE OF YOUTH

The ideal vademecum for youth leaders, teachers, and all those working directly with the younger generation of today. It is clear and concise and gives you just the information you need in order to understand the young people you guide.

THE IDEAL PARENTS

by

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Cum Permissu Superiorum

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DEDICATION

As one who believes in the tremendous importance of the profession of parenthood and one who has loved and worried over the children of today, I offer this little book to parents and future parents and the guides of parents.

May it help them a little to become or to form the splendid mothers and fathers of the future.

The Author

CONTENTS

Dedication 5

I. THE IRREPLACEABLE PARENT 11

Sources of All—Father and Mother Together—Mothers—Love Is Too Easy—Competition From Schools—Homes First in Everything—The Difference in Children—Reunited Families—Early Training—Winning Early Confidence—Part in Social Life—Parents' Rights and Duties—Wisdom and Justice—Talks on Parenthood.

II. THE JOY AND GLORY OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY 26

Axioms for Parents—From Infancy—Youthful Impressions—The Child Records—First Recorded Words—First Thoughts—Parents in Place of God—Imitation Starts Education—First Memories—Life's First Lesson, Love—Marred by Dislikes—Their Love for Him—Love with Justice—The Child as a Bond—Gracious Memories—The Impressions of Home—Visitors—Parents Professors of Speech—The Trained Voice—Profane, Evil Speech—Initiation into Culture—Talk and Books—The Little Child's Books—Children Collect—Train at Once—Law and the Child—Spanking?—Bluffed by a Baby—Early Religion—Pleasant and Essential.

III. THE PARENTS TAKE OVER 55

Reverence for the Body—Health—Doctors and Dentists—Food—Cleanliness—Play—Body for the Soul—The Child's Mind—No Fears—Superstitions—Pre-natal Nonsense—Critical Habits—Suspensions—Distrust—Alertness—Maternal Heritage—

Encourage Questions—Stimulating Interest—Appreciations—Skills—Emotional Development—Co-operation—The Sad Only Child—Comrades—Patriotism—Authority—Charity.

IV. STEPS TOWARD PURITY 83

Why Parents Shirk—Start Early and Continue—Adolescence Too Late—The Child's Development—Adolescence Dawns—The Little Child's Questions—Parents' Own Ideals—Pure Love of Parents—Books and Movies—The Visitors to the Home—The Church's Laws—Mothers' Ideals—Fathers' Ideals—Protective Attitude—Respect for Women—Tell Them the Truth—No Shock; No Surprise—No Humour or Ridicule—Simple Occasions—Lessons From the "Hail Mary"—Using the "Our Father"—Love Is Productive—Animal Pets—"Birds and Bees"—The Approach to Adolescence—The Girl's Periods—Boys' Adolescence—Night Releases—Differences in Boys and Girls—Temptations Natural and Induced—Subnormals or Liars—Seeking Temptation—Occasions of Sin—Ideals First.

V. TOWARD A MORE CIVILISED LIVING 119

Professionals Twenty-Four Hours a Day—Constantly Observed—By Deed, Not Word—The Teaching of One Father—No Spoken Advice, Yet...—Gallant Attitude—A Talk That Never "Came Off"—Words Not Necessary—The Civilised Virtues—Human and Humane—Honour and Honesty—Not Frankness—Individual Family Rights—Respect for the Rights of Others—Paying Bills—Borrowing—Honesty in Conduct—Honest Work in School—Love of Work—Morning Offering—The Father's Work—The Mother's Work—Children's Work in the House—Lazy Sons—Jobs as Symbols and Training—Respect for Authority—Teacher's Authority—Side with the Teacher—Respect for Civil Authority—Authority Is Delicat

Homemaking—Revolt Against Homelessness—Unity from Order—Time Schedule—Rising Time—Prompt Retiring—Meals Promptly—Fun Together—Guests.

VI. PARENTS AND THEIR AUTHORITY 153

Authority Belongs to Both—Orders Should Be Clear—Orders That Interrupt—Orders That Tax Memory—No Humiliating Orders—Say "Please"—...and "Thank You"—Punishment When Deserved—The Punishment of Loss—No Reasons Given—Without Discussion—Wheedling and Whining—Capricious Parents—Laws, Fixed or Transient—Favouritism.

VII. THE ROAD TO GOOD MANNERS 165

Charity at Home—Real Love—Good Manners at Home—What Are Good Manners?—Bad Manners Not Clever—Customs Versus Good Manners—Polite Parental Speech—Politeness Between Parents—Table Manners—Basic Practices—Simple Fundamentals—Staying Till the End of Meals—Unselfishness—Cleanliness and Proper Clothes—Parties—Listing the Guests—Pleased Watchers—Games and Conversation—The Children's Parties—Receiving—Presents—Introductions—Wide Friendship—Social Leadership—Dates to Remember—Letter Writing—Voices—Formulas—Handling People—Compliments—Card Games—Dancing—Brash or Shy—Respect for Privacy—Letters and Phone Calls—Private Drawer and Closet—Collections—Elders and Youngers—Natural Asset.

THE IRREPLACEABLE PARENT

Parents are the world's most influential professional people.

That, like much of what we shall have to write at the beginning, is commonplace, almost axiomatic.

Yet parents are the one group of professional people who are almost never trained for their work in life.

It seems strange that people bearing the enormous responsibility that rests upon parents should be tossed into their job with almost no preparation. For the magnitude and significance of their profession is too clear to need more than a passing gesture of recognition.

Parents produce the new life of the race. Parents support and nurture that life until such time as it is capable of becoming self-sustaining. Parents prepare the background against which will be lived the most impressionable years given to a human being. By nature and by the will of God as well as by the force of circumstances parents are the original teachers of everyone except the chance orphan or the waif who becomes immediately dependent upon charity, organised or disorganised.

SOURCE OF ALL

From parents, the preordained teachers, the child gets all the fundamentals of living. The gift of language is a parental gift. His first human habits are formed in imitation of his parents' actions. If there is religion in his life, it rises in the

first instance from the religious conduct of his father and his mother. Good manners or bad, a sense of morality or a primitive criminal code, the first glimmers of culture come to the child either from the direct teaching of his parents or from the conduct which the infant observes and notes for future reference.

All this is plain platitude—or it should be.

The facts of the case are however by no means in line with the platitudes. For parents themselves and those who are interested in parents are constantly bemoaning what can be called the complete parental collapse.

There are, thank heaven, splendid parents, strong, competent fathers and mothers who love their children both wisely and well—an important combination of adverbs in that particular case. Yet in thousands of cases young parents look at their newborn baby with a bewildered air of "What in the world do I do with him now?" Then as the child grows into adolescence, the parents come close to stifling over the necessity for explaining to the youngster the simplest facts about himself. Somewhat later the full-grown mothers and fathers, who dominate a thriving business or dominate a social world, find themselves embarrassed and afraid when they are faced down by their own offspring.

FATHER AND MOTHER TOGETHER

A father is one half of that important professional firm in which the mother is only the other half, even if you insist she is the more important half. For the training of the son the father is all-important. Only the father can give the boy that perfect male example which is the basis of the boy's soundest education. From the father the son gets his first glimpse of the

masculine virtues and the basic training in courage, gentleness, truth-telling, purity, the spirit of work.

In the life of every man there are what we recognise as the male ideals. No woman can present or inculcate them adequately. It is the father who establishes the male attitude toward religion. The noble attitude a boy will take toward women is about an equal blend of his love of his mother and the respect he has read in his father's conduct with women.

Even the daughter is profoundly affected by her father. His attitude toward women may become an important ideal in the shaping of her character. She finds strength in his ideals of women's virtues.

Ultimately, we must never forget, the authority of the family rests with the father and not with the mother. The father is the head of the family; and though in particular circumstances he shares that authority generously with the mother, he cannot none the less completely relinquish his right to govern. As a matter of fact I don't believe that the normal woman likes her husband to relinquish that right. I have never known a woman who in her heart of hearts did not want her husband to be her intellectual, physical, and even —where possible—her religious and social superior. Women are far more comfortable when they are looking up to a man than when they are looking down on him.

MOTHERS

Mothers in our country have had the task of the training of children laid quietly and finally in their laps. And at the same time they have found problems entirely in their own realm as mothers. There is the developed contempt for motherhood that is so frankly and widely expressed. Almost any

other career is regarded as superior to that of motherhood. The woman who produces a novel looks down her nose at the mother who has only three lovely children to show as her achievements. A woman who makes a success of a dress shop is regarded as a remarkable woman; a mother who beautifully dresses two little daughters on a carefully worked-out budget is a nobody who can be treated with amusement. It is praiseworthy for a woman to be an interior decorator and furnish the homes of other women; it is nothing meriting attention for a woman to make her own home a thing of joy and loveliness.

Indeed the young married woman these days begins almost on the day of her marriage to be bombarded with advertisements telling her how stupid she is to have children at all. Any woman who has to her eternal credit four children is regarded by her contemporaries as clearly a stupid ninny who hasn't sense enough, wit enough, or courage enough to protect herself against the aggression of children.

Even the good mother these days, the one who regards her profession with respect and affection, is likely to be harassed to the point of inefficiency. Once on a time motherhood was easily a woman's whole career, her full-time job. Now she may have to earn a living, not through any desire or greed on her part, but simply to keep the family together.

Or she is forced by the current of modern living into varied time-consuming activities. She must belong to clubs. She has to take part in charity work. She is asked to serve on committees or even to renew her youthful love of the amateur stage. She must be hostess to her husband's business associates, or she must travel with him when he goes on those tours which blend vacation with the making of "important contacts".

Again, as in the case of the father, she may feel toward her

job of motherhood that fear and apprehension and desire for flight that is common to all unprepared people. If anyone were to ask me to go out into the flying field and take a bomber up, I should beg to be excused. Quite obviously I am totally unprepared for the job. Indeed a perfect nightmare would consist in my finding myself in the air at the controls of a plane, which I know myself utterly unable to handle. We do with joy the job we feel prepared to do and adequate to handle. We are miserably ill at ease in any situation for which we know ourselves to be unfitted.

That is always true of untrained people, whatever the situation into which they are catapulted. So why be surprised that modern mothers shy away from the job of motherhood and are abjectly conscious of their lack of ability to handle it?

Girls in college will get splendid biology courses that make no slightest reference to the life of children. They will be trained to be excellent librarians or secretaries or teachers or laboratory technicians, and they will take up those jobs with relish. Then they transfer to marriage and motherhood, their real job, with the alarming realisation that no one has given them any preparatory help for the doing of this all-important job even passably well.

LOVE IS TOO EAST

Modern mores have done much to develop a destructive sort of maternal selfishness. I am not thinking of the unnatural woman, too common today, who renounces motherhood entirely in the hope that she will preserve her figure or remain a girl, when she should be a grown woman giving new life to the world. I am thinking instead of the mother who looks to her child merely for the love she can find there and for the gratification of her own desire for affection. She will not correct

the child because she is afraid that then it will not want to run to her arms. She will spoil it and pamper its vanity and make a doll and plaything of it—as if she herself were a child—not rear a strong young character, but drain from the baby or the little boy or girl adulation and easy affection for herself.

It is so easy to be easy with children. It is so hard to be strong enough in love to discipline the little ones we love.

COMPETITION FROM SCHOOLS

Now there is another factor that has made for parents' distrust of themselves: the unfair competition presented by the schools.

Experimental facts are completely against the shifting of parental responsibility to anyone else, even to the most expert educator. The school cannot remotely take the place of the home. Teachers cannot, except most inadequately, take the place of the parents.

Any intelligent child, no matter how young he is, feels the institutional character of even the best and the most modern school. The intensely personal relationship of parents and children in the intimate environs of the home cannot even be imitated in school surroundings. Children recognise that and in the vast majority of cases, like Shakespeare's immemorial schoolboy, still drag reluctantly to school.

At best schools are unnatural. There is something formal in the most informal, something regimented in the most systematically homelike. Perhaps the child instinctively knows that schools exist merely to supplement homes or because homes have failed their natural purpose. For certainly in the majority of cases the child resists school with a competence that is one of his most significant achievements. What he would have

drunk in naturally at home he regards as a chore in a classroom. Education that he was meant to absorb through his pores from the delightful association with his parents and his brothers and sisters now serves to stiffen his spine resistingly.

Schools were not in nature's plan. Children seem to know that. Hence it takes long years to teach children in school what they should be able to learn in a matter of months in a natural home environment.

Besides if parents have waited for the school to start the education of their children, they have waited much too long. School comes too, too late. Even with the incubating process common nowadays, where the fledglings are tucked away in educational brooders, the school still comes too, too late for its training really to affect the child. Children are established for life before they are five years old. After that they merely build on the foundation already laid. In fact some more modern psychologists are convinced that all essential foundations are laid in the child before he is two years old. And I don't know any schools that take children quite that early.

HOMES FIRST IN EVERYTHING

Any parent who thinks that he can shove off into schools the training of his children doesn't know either his children or the schools. Homes are the places where children learn easily, instinctively, without resistance, and under nature's own perfect conditions. Schools furnish merely the supplement to what the home has already given.

Hence it is that we who have taught in schools are grimly aware that the difference between the varied types of students before us is largely a matter of the training and preparation each received before he ever set foot in a classroom. The child from the good home is alert, interested, keen, on his toes, well

mannered, possessed of quick and right instincts. The child from the sloppy, inadequate home is dull, uninterested, unco-operative, bad mannered; he fails to catch on, fails even to try to catch on.

THE DIFFERENCE IN CHILDREN

The difference between this child and that one is often largely a matter of what he saw in and heard from his parents. His religious response, his sense of honesty, his ability to play with other children and be unselfish toward them, his attitude toward books, his appreciation of the beautiful, his sense of what is right and what is wrong, his quick apprehending of the charming and noble, his ready reaction to music that is good, his approval of heroism and his rejection of evil and cheapness—how happy the teacher who finds that all these things have already been established in the child's mind by the parents, who alone can deeply and strong-rootedly establish them!

We have to remind parents with all the insistence in our power that schools, even the most expensive or the most expert, cannot supply for fine heredity or wholesome environment. School does not give first impressions or second or third or ten thousandth. It can only correct, if possible, the false impressions made by parents, or it can continue the child's progress in the happy grooves established by a noble father and a gracious mother.

We teachers work on the material that is sent us by the parents. That material is already so formed and shaped and set and established and concreted that our modifications can often be only amazingly slight. No wonder then that we pray for good homes and parents who take seriously the inescapable duties of their profession. From fine parents come, except in rare and almost abnormal cases, fine children. From slovenly,

slipshod, careless, badly trained, neglectful, or definitely selfish and evil parents come. . . Ask any educator in his moments of honesty to finish that sentence. He can build with fine material. He works hopelessly with material already spoiled by the master builders who are the parents.

REUNITED FAMILIES

What I should like to see is groups of parents meeting in one another's homes to talk, perhaps under the guidance of a priest or a physician or a psychologist, about what they can do for their children and how they can do it.

EARLY TRAINING

Psychologists may differ on a great many things. On one platitudinous detail, essential and significant, they are unanimous: As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined; as the child is trained from birth to the age of five, he will probably in the main continue to the day of his death.

For a long time, as I noted, we have been expertly told that no one learns anything really new after the age of five. Now we are hearing that the fatal dead line has been pushed back further still: At the recent gathering of psychologists I referred to, it was maintained that all basic habits and character bents are developed before the baby has arrived at the ripe maturity of his second birthday.

You can choose whichever date you prefer as the ultimate boundary. Either one would make the responsibilities of the parents to their very young children almost frightening.

Certainly this would make all honest, sincere parents take their early responsibilities pretty seriously. They would not be likely to turn their children over for long hours a day to some little girl or some practically unknown woman hired for a few

rupees a week. They would know that during those impressionable years the child's whole future is made or ruined. Education does not begin with school; almost in a way it ends when the child leaves home for school. The best the teacher can do is supplement and build on the virtues and strength and character elements long since given to the child by the mother and the father.

No wonder teachers welcome a well-trained child from the hands of responsible and skilful parents. And no wonder they regard with something like despair the unkempt, untrained, weedy youngster, no matter how exquisitely he is dressed, who by careless, indifferent, weak, or bad parents has been pampered or neglected or abused or misshaped into a little caricature that can never be corrected or redrawn to the pattern of a fully developed human being.

Simply stated, everything important for the child's future begins during that period before ever he sets foot in a classroom. During this period the confidence between parents and children is established, and education is brought to its most important developments.

WINNING EARLY CONFIDENCE

I shall repeat in various forms the all-important fact that if fathers and mothers want the confidence and comradeship and trust of their children they must develop this in infancy and during the years that immediately follow infancy. There is something indescribably pathetic about an adolescent's mother and father who decide all of a sudden that they have not the child's trust and confidence (or confidences) and that right here and now, say at about the child's fifteenth or sixteenth birthday, they must go about getting that trust and confidence. They are exactly fifteen or sixteen years too late. That inti-

macy must be established when the child is utterly lacking in self-consciousness and when he looks up to his parents as to his whole world.

If when he is five years of age there is not a close bond of trust and fellowship between parents and child, only with miracles of labour and grace will that bond be established later.

Parents who wait until their child's adolescence to form a comradeship, to start to talk to him or to her, to begin to give advice and try to shape conduct, are going to meet a lot of unpleasant obstacles. Chiefly their children will regard them with startled amazement. What in the world has come over their parents?

These children will run a mile from any attempt their parents may make to establish camaraderie. If the parents try to give them intimate, personal information, they will blush, grow painfully confused, and on the slightest pretext or opportunity take to cover. I sincerely doubt that parents can take adolescent children and then for the first time make pals of them or sit them down for serious conversation and interchange of confidences or information. That should have been done years before. The boy or the girl beyond primary school is too self-conscious or too self-assured, too timid or too brash to be otherwise than startled, resentful, suspicious, or indignant at the intrusion if suddenly after years of silence and parental neglect he sees his mother and father abruptly bearing down upon him with profers of friendship or the unwanted and unwonted gifts of good advice.

PART IN SOCIAL LIFE

You see, one of the barriers between parents and children who until the children's adolescence have not discovered each other or built up confidence and comradeship is that the chil-

dren are likely to regard their parents as absurdly old. Anyone under twenty years of age, cynicised Somerset Maugham, is sure to regard anyone over forty as slightly ridiculous. So if parents and children have never played together, the youngsters probably look upon their oldsters as ancients tottering rapidly toward the cemetery. Naturally it is difficult to establish an easy relationship with a person who, to our way of looking at it, is separated from us by a long bridge of painful years.

Hence as the first approach of a parent to his adolescent child we offer the suggestion of almost any form of social life.

PARENTS' RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Perhaps at this point we should insert a section to remind parents that they have rights and that they have duties. Such a section would be solid with chestnuts and platitudes. Maybe chestnuts and platitudes are exactly what are needed to buck up the modern parent and reinstate him in the position from which he has been rudely shouldered.

The family is meant to be God's model society.

Even the great, inclusive civil state is only an amplified family, with the same basic powers of the family extended and increased to meet the wider needs of the state. We are quite right when we talk of the "family of nations". Family is the correct word. We are not far astray when the sentiments we hold for our country come very close to those we feel for our family.

Within this natural, God-ordained society which is the family there is that authority which is essential for right government, unity, and proper social functioning. That authority

rests first with the father, who is the head of the family. It is shared by the mother, who is the cocreator of the children and mistress of the home. Together the father and the mother make the council of a state for the family; and no matter how democratic the country's mode of thought may become, the parents hold that authority over their children, with their consequent obligation to use it wisely, justly, and well.

Children may fail, may become criminal failures despite the best efforts of parents. But if the parents have through neglect or too much love or sheer laziness failed to give their children the things that make for full character development and a sane and successful maturity, God will regard them as the real delinquents. Parents are professional people of the highest order. God and their fellow men judge professional people, not on the basis of what crimes they may not have committed, but by the standard of how well they have carried out the duties of their profession.

No parent can escape the obligations of his God-given authority.

No parent can hide behind the teacher, the school, the priest, the parish and say, "I asked them to handle my child for me." Parents' duties toward their children cannot be tossed into the lap of anyone else.

WISDOM AND JUSTICE

Hence in simple justice to themselves and to their children parents accept the authority God gave them and use it wisely and with loving justice. They know that it is their obligation to regulate the comings and the goings of their children. For it matters a great deal to the whole future of children when and where and with whom they go out and when and in what condition they return.

It is the parents' plain duty to regulate the spending of money, though they are wise if they teach their children early how to appreciate the value of money and how to use it generously yet not wastefully.

Parents have the final word on who shall come as guests to the house. Here they will be smart to show a great interest and leniency. They will be keen enough to know that if their children bring their friends home it is because those children are proud both of their friends and of their home. It is only the friend the parents are not allowed to meet that needs to worry them.

Father and mother have a certain jurisdiction over correspondence, though again with restraint. If letters come from an unknown source, parents have the right to ask to see them. If letters between their young son and some girl or between their daughter and some boy become far too numerous and suspiciously important to the child, they have the right to exercise a curb upon the momentary fervour.

TALKS ON PARENTHOOD

As the parents of our young people are not always too successful, what about classes in parenthood for students in high school and in college? It seems to me that high-school seniors should be given a series of good instructions on home-making, the authority and responsibilities of parents, the training of children, and the relation of both the father and the mother to the full development of the child.

I hasten to insist that there is no least touch of sex education in all this. It is merely a discussion of what to plan for the children when they are on their way and what to do for and with them after they have arrived. Indeed while talks on marriage necessarily bring in the matter of sex, talks

on parenthood can be remarkably free from that whole question, except in its most wholesome and reassuring aspects.

I certainly think that college students should be prepared for life by frank and effective discussions of child psychology, child problems, and the training of children by the parents.

For those who do not have these opportunities in school, the thousands of discussion clubs throughout the country can well handle this question that is so vital to the vast majority of young men and women. If experts can be introduced into the school discussion groups, these same experts can and should be brought into the young people's clubs of the parish and into the Sodality meetings, where are gathered the future mothers and fathers of the race.

I should like to see priests talk much more on parenthood.

Sermons on marriage always suggest themselves to the young priest. They seem to be attractive and hence are likely to attract a crowd. As a matter of cold fact unless they are extremely well done, they give the people little that is new and often serve to excite a degree of amusement and perhaps a bit of morbid curiosity. I should say that from my experience I have seen where too many talks and sermons have been given on marriage. . . while almost none is given on what is the great objective of marriage, the care and education of children.

People will always rush into marriage. Once in it, they often find themselves completely baffled by the mystery of the children who bless that marriage. Parenthood is the real problem. Parenthood is the vocation for which young people should be prepared.

2

THE JOY AND GLORY OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In this chapter we shall find ourselves thinking more and more in terms of the young mother and father, the parents with the child under six years of age. These are the really important parents. If they do their work well, everything will be almost simple for them as the years advance and their children grow older.

I don't think we need to do more than make a swift gesture toward those responsibilities which any decent parent, even the most casual or ignorant, recognises as resting upon him. Clearly parents are supposed to provide food—and good food—or the child starves. They are supposed to put a leakproof roof over the head of the child and an adequate bed or cradle under its helpless body. They are supposed to wrap the youngster in sufficient and clean clothing. They are expected to give the child normal love and care and disciplining.

Now that we have put all those obvious points in one paragraph, we can leave them for the rest of the book.

AXIOMS FOR PARENTS

Instead let us lay down a few axioms, without which we can hardly hope to develop our treatment.

Axiom One: The home is the laboratory of living.

Axiom Two: The home is the school of life.

Axiom Three: The home is the university for the development of the full man.

Axiom Four: The parents are the rulers of the home.

Axiom five: the parents are the faculty of the school and of the university.

Axiom Six: The entire day within a home is a developing programme of youthful education.

Axiom Seven: The student, the child, begins to learn at birth.

Like all other axioms these demand only a presentation. We need not delay to discuss or prove them. Anyone with any knowledge of civilised living admits them without further argument.

But like all other axioms... it is one thing to admit the intellectually, and another to act upon them and make them dominate one's conduct.

Once again we come back to those all-important mother laughs flow immediately from the axioms: that lack of interest in art; parents for the education of their children. be shifted to anyone else; that however the child, "a natural the home; that the education of the child hears from the parents who all the ingenuity and resource of speech, their smiles, the sound of that there is never a moment's loss of impressions left on the youthful brain. parents can say of it, "They've be slighted."

FROM INFANCY year later in the child, if the mother like his daddy," or the father thinks, grows more like her mother," the

Education begins with child may merely be reproducing what mistake could be made registered and retained as part of his or "Our child isn't old enough."

his mind is not yet manifesting itself. He may actually seem a charming little vegetable, eating and sleeping and soaking up sunshine, whose every gesture is instinctive and whose intelligence is as yet hidden deep down in his soul.

Even so his education has begun.

The lasting quality of early impressions is one of the things we all know from experience. We remember vividly the things that happened to us long before the age of reason: the time that, hardly able to walk, we rode the tricycle; the time we stuck out our tongue at our mother and came in intimate contact with the reverse side of a hairbrush; the times our father sat us on his knee and built up for us an idyllic childhood by telling us of the day when he was a boy; our visits to church with mother; the trips to the market when we were just barely children.

I do not know toward those impressions that mattered most to us are not necessarily the most casual impressions that we can consciously recall now. Clearly parents' impressions that left their mark upon our character—or the child starves this day unaware of the time or the circoof over the head of the child they were made—or for that matter under its helpless body. They were made.

Enter in sufficient and clean clothes the brain of the child is given the child normal love and care yet unmarked but waiting

Now that we have put all those impressions on the surface. When later on the graph, we can leave them for the rest of some other action,

AXIOMS FOR PARENTS the impressions left on
of consciousness.

Instead let us lay down a few axioms. Instead of hardly hope to develop our treatment

Axiom One: The home is the laboratory—rightly or wrongly—to

Axiom Two: The home is the school from his earliest youth.

Though long since forgotten, these things may still be the motivating influences for action that he finds hard to explain and feelings and ideas for which he can consciously discover no origin.

That youthful impressionable brain constantly registers what goes on around it. The impressions are stored up for later use. Sometimes with advancing maturity the impressions are recalled, mulled over, puzzled about, or understood. Often they become, without our meditating or planning or even clearly understanding, the standards of our future conduct. For good or evil they modify the future development of the human being.

Hence for two different reasons parental characteristics may turn up in the children. It is possible that these are passed on in the life germs transmitted by the mother and the father to their offspring. Characteristics may lie hidden in the chromosomes, waiting for manifestation in later life: the way the father crooks his little finger; the way the mother laughs or smiles; the parents' liking for music or lack of interest in art; a pleasant manner or a churlish disposition.

Beyond these inherited factors however the child, "a natural mimic, copies what he sees in and hears from the parents who lean over his crib. Their actions, their smiles, the sound of their voices, the tricks of their speech, their instinctive gestures—these are the first impressions left on the youthful brain. They create the first grooves.

If these qualities appear later in the child, if the mother says, "Why that's just like his daddy," or the father thinks, happily, "Everyday she grows more like her mother," the little imitator who is the child may merely be reproducing what he or she has seen and registered and retained as part of his or her basic equipment.

THE CHILD RECORDS

Even a few seconds at the crib of a baby reveal the intense activity of his eyes and ears. Long before he begins to speak, these are at work. His eyes and ears are simply soaking up everything that goes on around him. They are the direct channels leading to the baby's soft, expectant brain. They are the phonograph needles leaving behind a trail of vital impressions to be played back when the child has grown old enough to use the record he is making.

Of course all the early learning done by a child is instinctive. If a child never hears people speak, he will never speak. He may make arbitrary signs that signify the ideas in his mind, but he will never express them in words until he has heard over and over again the sound of words uttered within reach of his receptive ear.

What is true of the development of his speech is true of so many other human faculties, the listing of which would be catalogic.

The child watches and observes. What he sees his parents do, he tries to do. What he hears them say, he tries to repeat. When they clap their hands together, so does he. He learns to echo their laughter with his imitative crow. His eyes follow their gestures. His ears drink in their inflections, the timbre and character of their speech.

So it is that the baby becomes a little copy, a record of his environment, and for the first few months an inarticulate copy of those people who are closest to him.

Even the most careless, thoughtless parent in the world in consequence of all this is incessantly teaching the child. His teaching may be all to the bad; the teaching itself goes on without interruption.

FIRST RECORDED WORDS

But where the parents are good, they are pouring their own goodness into the child—everything from the charm of their speech and the grace of their movements to the ideals of love and God that lie in their souls.

Only because it is so important a fact do I even mention that the first spoken words of the child come straight from the lips of his parents. That is why most children say *mamma* and *daddy* first. Blessed egotists that they are, the parents have trained the child—in fact they have besought him—to say the words they wanted to hear. Under the constant parental bombardment of “Say *mamma*! Say *daddy*!” the child at last picks up the sounds and gives them back, to the unending joy of the dear ventriloquists who have put the words right into his mouth.

That is why occasionally we read in history of saintly mothers and fathers who, loving Christ and Mary more than they loved themselves, heard their children, future saints, say as their first words, not *mamma* and *daddy*, but Jesus, Mary and Joseph. That too was the reflex of the parents themselves, the holy echo of the names they loved best.

FIRST THOUGHTS

So too the first thoughts put into the child's mind come from the parents. The parents point, call attention to, or are merely present and filled with these ideas. The child in that endless mimicry of infancy picks up these gestures, cries, ideas. First habits are born, not of reasoned planning or conscious mental operation, but of the frank copying of the habits of mother and father.

In Kenneth Grahame's lovely book, *The Golden Age*, the

youngsters consistently think of the older members of the family as the Olympians. They tower above their youthful lives like blissful gods leaning down from Mount Olympus. Like the ancient gods of Greece they are often unreasonable, whimsical, uncertain, and hard to understand. Always they are godlike in size and proportions, godlike in thinking and planning, godlike in the shadow they cast over the lives of the earth dwellers who are their sons and daughters.

That, in poetic fashion, is the way in which all children think about their parents. Perhaps for that very reason God chose as His favourite title for Himself, Our Father. For to the dawning intelligence of a child his parents, his strong father and tender mother, brood over his cradle as God broods over the world. They take God's place in the little world of infancy. Not only have they created the child; they are God's providence manifested toward him, feeding him and caring for him and actually, like God Himself, holding him in the crook of their arms.

It easily happens then that during those early years the growing child regards almost any attitude or custom or speech of his parents as inevitably right. They are his little gods; they are his supermen. In very truth they stand by the order of God in His place. Their majesty and might and power seem all-enveloping.

PARENTS IN PLACE OF GOD

That admiration for parents is simply part of God's economy of childhood. I remember so clearly my own attitude toward my father. Our family had been marked by doctors and lawyers, a minister or two, professional men of various kinds. My father was not a professional man; he was merely a man of business, which made him seem very different from someone who had

a title and a standing of dignity. Yet when I was asked by some visiting guests what I intended to be when I grew up, I shocked the visitors and alarmed my family by announcing, in a very childish soprano, "I am going to be nothing, like my daddy."

Parents stand in the place of God. The child takes it for granted that in their "perfections" they are right, entirely imitable, patterns according to which young characters are to be formed.

Hence in no time at all the child's unconscious imitation is abetted by conscious imitation. He tries, this small god of his little world, to be like his parents. Half consciously, half instinctively he picks up his parents' tag phrases, their tricks of language, the codes of conduct they express casually in his presence, their moral attitude and religious principles. He even tries to imitate his parents when they raise their eyes in appreciation of a picture, or to copy the intentness with which they listen to music.

IMITATION STARTS EDUCATION

On these instinctive and half-conscious factors will be established the education of the growing child. If the parents realise the unexcelled opportunities that are theirs and really try to capitalise on their children's youthful admiration, they can do wonders toward the developing of their children's ability. If their training is sketchy and their language, conduct, codes, habits far from worthy of imitation, even a long lifetime of later education and training may not undo the neglect of those first five years.

A little reminiscing in our own parts makes us realise how very soft and impressionable were our minds before the dawn of reason. I always feel quite safe in challenging an audience

of adults to repeat nursery rhymes. If they really learned them in the nursery, they remember them today.

We can without difficulty rattle off the stories of *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Bean Stalk* and *Sindbad the Sailor* because we were told these stories when we were offering to our parents a blank mind all ready to be impressed with first contacts. We can remember stories that our dad told us. We can even recall the name of his favourite dog. We can remember what our mother wore on a certain occasion and how beautiful she looked.

Again that just try to recall that clever little verse you read the other day with the determination, "Now I'm going to remember that and tell it to my friends." Repeat that joke that made you laugh so heartily at dinner yesterday. What was the plot of that magazine story you read in your favourite weekly a few day ago? What did your wife wear the last time you went out together—unless you happen to remember, not the outfit, but the bill that came as an unhappy accessory to the dress.

FIRST MEMORIES

In *High Tor*, Maxwell Anderson presented a situation that the audience recognised and found amusing. His two villains are captured in the crane and hang perilously over the cliff. It's a time for praying, no doubt of that; but the two old scamps can't recall either a prayer or a method of praying. Then one of them rakes up out of the past a child's prayer. He can pray, and he does:

"Now I lay me down to sleep," he begins—certainly no prayer for a man hanging in danger of his life over a steep embankment.

The only prayer he can recall is one that was ruttet in

his brain when he was a boy, when childhood prayers became part of his ineradicable experiences.

In summary of all this we simply have to remember that long before the child's first conscious effort to speak or the parents' first conscious effort to teach him, the human learning process has been going on. Even the most casual and thoughtless parents have been teaching their child things they never dreamed they were teaching him. He has been instinctively observing them. He has been making permanent records of speech and conduct. He has been storing up experiences that will last him for ever. Already his character and cast of thought, his speech and his ideals have been shaped into lines that will continue throughout a lifetime.

LIFE'S FIRST LESSON, LOVE

The great commandments of Christ the Saviour concern themselves with the very first lesson that parents give their children: *love*.

For without the shadow of a doubt good parents can give their children, from the babies' infancy, lessons in the purity and self-sacrifice and beauty of the love of man for God and of man and woman for each other.

Over the baby's crib and under the restless, hardly focusing eyes of the baby the parents manifest their deep, pure, mutual love. Instinctively, without knowing what is happening, the baby watches the father put his arm around his wife's waist and kiss her tenderly. Sometimes the parents laugh as the baby in seeming response crows. Perhaps that is a real and not a seeming response. Perhaps the infant is made happy by the radiations of love which come from his parents to warm him and light his life.

Certainly the parents can give the child from the start of his life a demonstration of love in its purest human form. His first impression may be that of the kiss his father bestows upon his wife when he kneels at her side in the sick-room and she draws back the coverlet to show him the newborn child. As the weeks progress, the child unconsciously records the passing history of his parents' love. He sees enacted before his eyes the drama of their affection. He notes the change in their voices as they speak to each other. He records on his soft brain the pet names they use for each other. He is made happy by the joy they feel in each other's company.

As important to a child as the sunlight streaming through the open window or the pure milk from his mother's breast is the atmosphere of love that is created by his mother and his father in their unselfish, deep love, a love which envelopes him.

MARRED BY DISLIKES

On the other hand the infant may be exposed to the stormy, lightning-charged, black atmosphere of parental dislike. Over his crib the parents may quarrel, and he is frightened by that as he is by the crash of thunder outside his window, more frightened because this danger seems terrifyingly close to him. He may record their sharp speech, their dislike expressed in hot, burning, searing words. He may keep embedded in the soft fibre of his brain the memory of their cruelty as they strike at each other. His emotional nature may be twisted and warped before he has any glimmer of consciousness—simply by the atmosphere of recrimination and hatred that is generated by parents who have grown to dislike each other.

God help the poor youngster whose infancy is blurred and

shocked and distorted by a mother and a father who hate each other openly and in bitter words or secretly but in waves of emotion that vibrate around the bed of their helpless little baby.

THEIR LOVE FOR HIM

Flowing from this love for each other is the love his parents feel for him. This too is constantly touching his emotions. This too is leaving upon his mind and heart a record that will sound sweetly when consciously or unconsciously he plays it in later years.

The love of the parents for their child should of course result in an increased unity. How terrible when parents struggle for the love of even a baby! when they fight each other to take first place in his affection! when the mother nullifies the commands of the father or the father cuts the ground from under the orders of the mother in the case of older children! when each tries to outdo the other in love and leniency so that he or she will be the one loved more—because he or she is the gentle, affectionate, easygoing parent, while the other is the stern and law-enforcing one!

How terrible when the child actually divides the parents! when the father in the hearing of the child—even though the child be an infant—taunts the wife with her neglecting him for the sake of the baby and loving the baby more than she loves him! or the mother early develops a jealousy of the father's devotion to the child and lets that jealousy radiate above the child's awakening perceptions!

Few things could more powerfully affect for good the infancy of a child than the warmth and truth of paternal and maternal affection co-operating to care for him. Such a baby is literally bathed in affection. And such affection may serve

to orientate his whole emotional life in the most wholesome fashion.

LOVE WITH JUSTICE

On the other hand even in infancy the child can become aware that, much as they love him, his parents cannot by their love be swayed from the strict justice that is his due. He cannot stretch out his arms, squeeze forth a few easy tears, and immediately melt their determination to punish him when punishment is called for.

It is amazing how quickly infants realise that they can put it over on their parents and with what facility they proceed to do so. Love their children they surely must. But they must love them enough to punish them when punishment is necessary to curb an already bad disposition or the habit of whining or a vicious temper displayed in the cradle. Bad dispositions, whining, and rotten tempers do not develop in children after they are conscious of the meaning of sin; these develop when the baby is still feebly kicking, still gripping his inept hand.

Then and there love must be strong enough to do the thing which in the long run is for the child's happiness. Without any conscious process of thinking or recognising, the child knows strong love from weak love, justice from an inordinate desire on the part of the parents to be loved and thought tenderly loving.

THE CHILD AS A BOND

All around the infant God and nature meant that there should be displayed a real family unity. The child was intended to bind the mother and the father closer together. As the fruit of their love, he was to give their love fulness of meaning. So if such family unity does result, the child is very lucky

indeed. In his soft brain and upon his flexible emotions is recorded an ideal of home life and family harmony that will profoundly affect the home he himself later comes to establish. That ideal may be the very basis on which, arrived at maturity, he will build his own fine paternity, on which she will establish the virtues of a fine mother. Perhaps the quality of the home he will build is established before he has said for the first time the word *mamma* or *daddy*.

Lucky indeed is the child whose growing life is surrounded by an atmosphere of love, the frank love of the mother and the father, their united love for him.

He watches and approves and long remembers his parents' kissing each other on the father's returning from the day's work or on his leaving to be gone even for only a few hours. I have never forgotten the fact that my father invariably kissed my mother even if he meant to be gone only from the room for a little longer than usual and that she greeted him on his home-coming each evening with outstretched arms and an affectionate kiss.

GRACIOUS MEMORIES

The happy symbolism of birthdays becomes a part of his emotional background. The gifts that are given within the family are signs of the welcome felt for the child who added his presence to the family or an indication of the children's gratitude to their father and mother.

As sounds begin to gather in his mind and become coherent words and intelligible sentences, he grows to approve of the gentle tones that mark the voices of his parents as they speak to each other. When his father calls his mother dearest, the child may already be aware that this is an adjective in the

superlative, reserved for his father's superlative woman. The poetic word darling, as yet not understood by the child, is still on the lips of his mother clear indication of the affection she feels for his dad.

He comes to know their frank enjoyment of each other's company. He makes an effort to fit himself into their joy.

Love is the first lesson that should be taught to every child. He should find it in the love of his brothers and sisters for one another and for him. He should see it in the attitude his parents take toward their friends, the real pleasure with which they welcome them. Charity in the true sense of love must begin at home. If it does, it is the warm cushion that protects the new little human being against the harsh shocks of the world that has just received him.

THE IMPRESSIONS OF HOME

Love, we always like to remember, is essentially productive. This is why the love of a mother and a father results in that wonderful production which is a home.

To all of us the home of our childhood remains the most important house in the world. With the years we come to magnify it. We spread out its proportions and invest its rooms with an ample spaciousness they did not really possess.

Priests who have spent quite a time in the seminary, or religious who for a period of years have been living in a religious house, or for that matter a man and a woman who have been long absent from the home of their childhood are amazed upon their return to find how really small the house is. In their absence they dreamed of the living room as being big enough to contain all their young friends at the same time, plus possibly a couple of swing bands and a small army of secondary

acquaintances. They thought of the dining room as being little short of a banquet hall; King Arthur's knights wouldn't be too crowded around that ample table.

Then still under the spell of the magnifying power of childish memory they return and find the house quite tiny and the rooms they had remembered as stretching out into space really cramped and almost oppressively narrow.

Such is the simple influence of a sense of importance upon a memory of size. That first house of our childhood was enormously significant; therefore it must have been vast in proportions and capacious in its power to welcome our friends.

The first observations of an infant—after those he makes on his parents—may well be directed toward the room in which he is cradled and then toward the house that surrounds that room. He soon develops a perception of the attitude his parents take toward their home: the song that his mother sings as she goes about her work; the gaiety that seems to fill her soul with when she arrives him down to the kitchen or moves him about her as she dusts and vacuums the house.

He notes in a permanent record the interest his father takes in the house. He gets the impression of dad's cutting the lawn while he himself sits in the sun in his perambulator. He hears the discussion of the new draperies for the windows or the new rug for the floor. He drinks in the charm of furnishings, which, as anyone knows, need not be expensive to be delightful. The home improves as the earnings of the family increase; after all since it is the setting against which they live their lives, his parents want it to measure up to their advancing income.

VISITORS

The visitors who come to the house certainly make an impression upon him.

I have thought that some brilliant cartoonist might well do two contrasting pictures, both dealing with childhood.

Both pictures would show a cluster of little children behind the staircase railing on the second floor of the house. They are looking down, wide-eyed with interest, their faces thrust out between the spaces in the balustrade, their young brains drinking up the party that is in progress on the lower floor.

The first picture would show a gay, happy, decent, utterly wholesome yet thoroughly enjoyable party. The adults would be having a wonderfully good time. There would be excellent food and drinks either non-intoxicating or if intoxicating handled with the mastery of civilised men and women over a friend who might prove an enemy. The games would be gay. The conversation would be brisk. The laughter would be clean, sincere, and from the heart.

The artist would not have much difficulty in painting upon the faces of the young observers their total approval of the scene and their delight in the gaiety that fills the house.

The second picture would show a very different type of party. There would be drunks, both male and female. The men would be amorous and the women easy. The games would destroy all sense of dignity. The laughter would be raucous and of that unmistakable timbre that follows the vulgar, obscene jest.

This time the childish faces above might be hard to paint. For they would be frozen in horror, rigid in a paralysed fascination, revolted yet acutely curious, shocked yet drawn to drink it all in with unblinking stares.

I wonder if even the sounds of the party that float up to the infant in the crib, sounds blending subconsciously with his dream phantasms, might not leave a lasting impression. Certain-

ly there must be a jolt and a shock when a pair of giddy parents drag up to the nursery their giggling, tipsy guests, who into the face of the baby wheeze their foul-smelling breath as they lift him with uncertain hands and drool over him in a fashion that inevitably frightens him and excites an instinctive repugnance.

Is it possible to emphasise too strongly the importance of the first impressions left upon infancy by parents and home? I frankly doubt it. Yet otherwise smart people will imagine that education begins when the youngster packs his first school books in a brand new strap and wanders off to a classroom. I am almost tempted to repeat that his basic education ends, rather than begins, at that moment.

PARENTS PROFESSORS OF SPEECH

Once on a time it was my destiny to teach English. I had a year with the boys in high school. I had three years of teaching English in college. I met boys who wrote extraordinarily well and boys who made a simple sentence go through contortions that were ruinous to the sentence and a source of real pain to the listeners. I have met college freshmen who had a quick appreciation of literature that made my teaching merely the happy job of handing out books to be read; and I have met freshmen in the same class who regarded Charles Lamb's delicate essays as the most unintelligible moonshine and the poetry of Francis Thompson as the ravings of a dope fiend or—as they themselves would express it—the windjamming of a dope.

Challow much for innate genius and the fairy godmother who presides over the christening of those destined for the creation of literature. Yet I knew that with the vast majority of students the difference between the young man who found English easy and delightful and the one who beat a sentence to death with his fountain pen and faced the classics with sweat

on his brow was almost entirely a matter of the type of language and the kind of books each had received from his parents.

Parents are professors par excellence. For years the children's speech is entirely a matter of parental construction. Their sense of words, their mastery of sentence form, their use of slang as substitute for speech or as the spice and flavouring speech, their breadth of vocabulary—whether it will consist of one hundred and fifty hackneyed and threadbare words or swing out into a comprehensive and exact list that presents each object and each occasion by the use of the correct term—all this is so absolutely within the control of parents that teachers in later years labour in vain to overcome in their students the defects of speech imparted in youth.

On the other hand correct speech presented as an early gift by the parents will survive the battering of companions and the pressure of bad luck and bad association with the gutter language of the world.

THE TRAINED VOICE

So the ordinary conversation that parents use around the house is the greatest training in speech that a child will ever get. The infant is alert to sounds. They register on him, I must repeat, in soft, permanent grooves. If the parents' grammar is correct and their choice of words pleasant and accurate, the child's speech from the beginning moves toward a delightful language. If the parents are victims of bad grammar, bad grammar will mark their child's speech and I find him in later years to slip disastrously, like the heroine of *Pygmalion*.

Clean speech is picked up by children from their parents. But so is the casual vulgarity which the father (or, heaven forbid, us, the mother) thinks the child is too young to register or un-

stand. The father who curses around the house in the presence of his children is likely to have children who curse arrogantly before the children of the neighbours—unless it happens that they are shocked into distaste for evil language that may be part of their instinctive distaste for the father who introduced that language to them.

Observant parents will notice that their inflections and modulations of voice are picked up and repeated by the children. Charming speech in a mother will be copied by a daughter, exactly as she will copy, while she is still a youngster, her mother's style in clothes. When on the other hand parents are noisy, crude, harsh, loud-mouthed, what can they expect but noisy, crude, harsh, loud-mouthed little brats who are the despair of the teacher and the bearers of diseased language to other children?

It is only fair to note however that sometimes loudness and coarseness of parents' speech result in a completely reversed reaction. A teacher will find in her class a singularly silent, reticent child. He can hardly be made to raise his voice to answer questions to which he clearly knows the answers. Perhaps a phone call or a visit to the child's home resolves the puzzle. It may be that the father's roaring speech rattles the windows, or the mother, once she has turned on the tap of her conversation, flows on and on and on until the room is flooded with her talk and the listener is washed out on the tides of her purposeless, repetitious, tiresome speech.

Children sometimes meet parental loudness by unconsciously cultivating almost mousy voices; or they counteract the flow of endless chatter with a painful silence.

PROFANE, EVIL SPEECH

Correct speech is a fine art. It is an art that descends normally from parents to children. That is true both of the

form of speech and its content. Bad grammar is an ugly heritage. But so is bald profanity. Sloppy sentences are caught up from parental lips and repeated, as is an interest in the common and trivial and unimportant that marks so much of the chatter about the house.

One horrible travesty on training is the encouraging of children in bad habits of speech. Some people think it funny to hear a child break into bad grammar or vulgarity. They even teach them profanity, slightly off-colour songs, stories, and poems that are mildly (or not so mildly) shocking, on the supposition that the babies do not understand. They understand enough, believe me, to become copies of the *Dead End Kids*.

They sense evil long before they understand it. They pick up a dirty word and know it is dirty before they have any idea what it may happen to mean—as for that matter they will often spot and shy away from an impure man or a soiled woman whom their elders have not as yet classified. That same strange protective sense will sometimes exist in young women. They will know that a joke is dirty though happily the point of the joke escapes them. They will suspect a man of evil long before he has stopped playing the pseudo gentleman.

So children who hear from their parents and their parents' associates indecent words, smutty songs, purple jokes, and profanity are likely, at a time when their parents regard them as unintelligent and unobservant innocent, either to be shocked by it or to garner it for future use.

INITIATION INTO CULTURE

If parents are the fundamental and only really successful teachers, they are also, consciously or unconsciously, the ones who initiate their children into the whole field of culture.

I am thinking of the pictures that hang on the walls of the

nursery and the pictures which later the children see on the walls of the rest of the house. I am thinking too of the type of music loved by the parents, whether they themselves are singers and performers or just people with an appreciation of good music. Children are going to be affected for life by the programmes which the parents select on the radio and by the records which they play on their recording machines. A child is never going to outgrow altogether the early contact with lovely pictures, nor are the melodies and harmonies that he heard in his earliest days ever going to leave his memory entirely.

Fortunate the child whose parents love the beautiful and early surrounded him, according to their means and opportunities, with things that woke his infant mind to charm of colour and grace of line. Fortunate too the child who heard good music before he had a chance to be spoiled by the percussion of cheap, transient stuff. Here again the parents make or mar. They are the only lasting guides to culture.

TALK AND BOOKS

The same influence is exercised by the type of conversation at table and in the living room. What are the parents interested in? What do they talk about? The children will in later years find themselves recalling those subjects and gravitating toward them unconsciously but by remote control.

It is impossible to overestimate the impact of books upon the child early in his life. Suppose the parents read to the child, and read to him from his early years the things that he will find of lasting value. His good luck is something for which he can thank God gratefully.

Some weeks ago I had a letter from a young woman whom I had known when she was in college. She had since then

married happily, and she was expecting her first baby in about six months.

"I should like," she wrote, "to be a really successful mother. If there is anything to prenatal influence, can you tell me what I should be reading in preparation for the coming of my child? It would be wonderful if I really could give my baby a beautiful start in life."

I answered somewhat to this effect:

"Actually what effect it would have upon the baby to have you read poetry or other beautiful things right now isn't too clear. If you are happy and your mind is full of wholesome things, if you are spending the days close to God and feeling around you the guardian angel of your little child, you are doing what you can be sure will make happy his arrival.

"But let's look a little beyond his arrival. Your mind will be the cultural matrix into which his mind will first be poured. So how about reshaping that mind of yours with all the beautiful things you'll want to give your child?

"Read the life of Christ carefully and pick out the episodes you'll want to tell your baby when you begin to tell him stories. Read the lovely legends of the saints and tuck them away as the great adventures that will make your child open-eyed with wonder.

"How about refreshing yourself with the nursery rhymes so that as you chant them to your baby you'll give him a sense of poetic rhythm that he will never outgrow?"

"There are the great classical fairy tales that should be part of his equipment—the international stories like *Cinderella* and *Bluebeard* and *Rumpelstiltskin*. You won't want him to miss the great Greek myths, which though they are fairy tales are yet so eminently true. You'll probably want to tell him fairy tales and let him meet the heroes and heroines of Hans Christian And-

ersen and the brothers Grimm even before he has learned to read.

"And how about looking over the lovely children's poetry and renewing acquaintance with the children of Shakespeare's plays and with the plots that he uses so excitingly? Dickens has in his books a lot of charming youngsters that your baby ought to meet as he is growing up.

"If you want to be a mother who will leave her cultural impress on her baby, get ready to tell him the stories early, for he will love anything that comes to him by way of your voice. Then when he is a little older, read the stories to him. Finally he will be ready to have the books themselves placed in his hands when he is able to pore over them for himself.

"But yours is the taste that will determine his. I should say that you had plenty to do before your baby is born in order to make yourself the one who will form his tastes and introduce him to the culture that should be his heritage."

THE LITTLE CHILD'S BOOKS

No one can possibly overestimate the impact of books early in childhood. They hit the mind in unforgettable fashion. If they are great books, part of the tradition of all mankind, the child's mind is enriched before ever he enters a classroom. If he has not had all this by the time he gets to school, he has probably had his mind corrupted and vitiated by the flood of "comics" and "funnies" and newspaper strips and movie magazines which unfit many children for the eternal and glorious books and stories that should be the foundations upon which a genuine culture is built.

Anyone who has ever taught knows that it is practically impossible to make a child love great literature unless he has met it before the age of five. When however he comes from parents

who themselves love literature and have made it easily and happily accessible to the child, he is a sheer delight to teach and an easy disciple to help climb higher and higher on the cultural mountain.

CHILDREN COLLECT

During those earlier years then parents turn their children toward those cultural habits which may last for life.

The tiny youngster is encouraged to start his own library and care for his own books. He is inspired to start other collections too: pictures that he cuts and mounts; musical records that he himself plays as part of the family programme; anything of cultural value that turns his mind toward beauty and sets his feet on the upward path to Parnassus.

Hobbies should be started, not during high-school days, when it is too late, but during these preschool days. Any sort of collecting, whatever it is, is prelude to a lifetime of collecting, which is one of the natural joyous human experiences.

TRAIN AT ONCE

There is no really effectual disciplining later on if the child has not been well trained before the age of reason. Yet during that period parents who can afford it will carelessly turn their children over to the care of nurses, casual governesses, even the little girl who earns a bit of money for the motion-picture shows by wheeling babies in the afternoon after school.

Said a great baby doctor to me once: "If the rich people of our city put in one tenth the time training their children from babyhood that they spend on their young jumping horses and their hunting dogs, the headlines of our papers would not cry aloud the scandals and divorces and social and spiritual failures of their sons and daughters."

LAW AND THE CHILD

Children in infancy are not conscious of law or the meaning of law. They cannot be argued into noble courses or talked into goodness. But they can be made very conscious of the operations of law. They learn that rapidly.

When they are good, they experience reward.

When they are bad, there is a swift and inexorable punishment.

Even the youngest child seems capable of making those simple connections. A burst of anger (and how little babies can put it on!), and he gets a sharp, immediate punishment. A smile and a control of his temper, and there is a bit of sweetness in his mouth.

Unfortunately—or fortunately, depending upon your point of view—God and nature have seen to it that the only early approach to the disciplining of children is the very approach used with animals. You cannot argue with a litter of pups—or with a baby in his cradle. A talk on the nobility of goodness and the punishment of vice is wasted on a kitten or on an infant; but rewards and punishments speak eloquently with either.

SPANKING?

And that brings me to the subject of spanking—a subject from which I promptly shy away. Who am I to tell parents whether to spank or not to spank? I merely call their attention to the fact that God and nature have centred a great many nerve ends in a spot where they can be reached effectively and utterly without harm. When they are so reached, the child knows he has been punished, and he doesn't enjoy it one bit. He is likely to avoid the things which in the past have led to that irritation of those nerve centres. Thus has been developed a

We have all come to feel a sentimental love for that picture of the young mother sitting in a chair while her little child kneels at her knee. The mother's-knee theme is however more sentimental and pretty than actually effective. If the parents wish to leave in the child's mind an example the child will never forget, let them kneel along with the child. Then they are not teachers instructing a child in the course of conduct they recommend; they are companions doing the things which the child loves to do right along with them.

The recurrence of the names of Jesus and Mary on the lips of the parents early in the life of the child is a wonderful start for his whole life. Grace said at table, the sight of dad and mother kneeling together to make their morning offering or to say their night prayers, the stories of Jesus and Mary and the saints that are early made a part of his mental equipment, the religious books that are placed within reach of his hands—all these things are starts, but most important starts along the road to religious maturity.

PLEASANT AND ESSENTIAL

Religion is as a matter of cold fact simply one of the pleasant and essential parts of a complete human being's existence. It should be so treated. Like all the other pleasant and essential parts of existence it is taken for granted by the parents, made a normal exercise, not discussed in any way other than the way that one discusses the necessity for eating, exercise, cleanliness, or attendance at school. It ranks higher than all these things of course; but no more than these other necessities is it to be made an event, something to be built up, argued about, threshed out

THE PARENTS TAKE OVER

In an ideal society home and school both work in close collaboration, the home always in first place. Parents and teachers are partners. But the parents are always the senior partners, the ones with the real voice in the training of the children.

Let's start with the simple fact that the care of the child's body and his health is properly the function of the parents. Even when they summon the services of a physician, they do so in order that he may advise them on how better to guarantee this mental and physical health for the child. They do not expect him or permit him to take over and push them aside. He gives his expert advice; that advice the parents then carry into execution.

Parents' care of the child's body begins with their inculcating in the child right attitudes toward that body and toward health.

REVERENCE FOR THE BODY

The first of these correct attitudes is a simple matter of respect for the body that God in so wonderful a fashion fitted to that soul.

We believe that the human body is the special creation of God. For all its likeness to the higher animals it is amazingly different. No one in his right mind ever mistook, no matter how dark the night, a chimpanzee for a human being. The

young lady who opens her door to an expected caller does not fancy that the gorilla in tux who is carrying a corsage is the young man she thought to welcome. No man, however remote from human society, has thought it as pleasant to walk the woods with a female orangutan as with a debutante.

It is a tenet of Christian belief that the human body is basically the creation of God, but certain evolutions regarding size, shape, and characteristics are not absolutely excluded by Christian belief.

The Christian believes that at the very moment of conception there are for the formation of the human being, not two, but three who participate: the father, the mother, and God, the father and the mother as God's agents, God as the creator.

The Christian believes that a body must be trained and disciplined, brought into subjection when it rebels, and never allowed to become the master of the superior soul. He does not believe that it should be killed or made weak and sick or treated as a drag or a nuisance or a mistake that God has hung around the neck of the soul.

HEALTH

They teach the child to respect his body. They teach him to care for it, to keep it immaculately clean, to work for its development, to avail himself of the bodily strength and skill innate in the human nerves and muscles. Yet they refuse to let him worship his body or regard it as the supreme concern of his life.

Health, the child should learn from the beginning, is valuable. Like anything else that is valuable, it must be safeguarded with normal rational care. It is however by no means in-

valuable. Men have risen above ill-health to become what Francis Thompson has called "the world's great dyspeptics". Women have triumphed over ill-health by sheer courage of soul and the greatness of mind. Bedridden invalids have influenced the course of history. Cripples have, with a pad of paper resting on their chests, written great books. Milton in his blindness saw paradise lost and regained. Steinmetz developed despite a twisted body his incredible power over electricity. Sick mothers have given the world healthy children and lovely, orderly homes.

DOCTORS AND DENTISTS

As part of the rational attitude toward health a friendly attitude toward physicians and dentists should be inculcated by the parents.

The normal place that the doctor and dentist have in the life of the civilised man should simply be taken for granted. The family doctor is a wise institution. He becomes more than merely a physician; he is the family friend, the family trouble shooter, and his pleasant recurrence in the family makes the children accept him as a normal visitor whose visits are not to be dreaded or regarded as extraordinary portents of danger but to be regarded as the kindly arrival of someone who is connected with their speedy recovery from illness and their fuller health.

For physicians and dentists there must be no wild praise and no exaggerated credulity. That sometimes happens. Parents talk of the doctor and the dentist as if they were miracle men, and often the children are disillusioned at the quite reasonable limitations in the doctors they themselves seek out later in life.

On the other hand parents may inbreed in their children a lifelong contempt for or fear of physicians and dentists. The father at the table some night, irritated at the physician who on that day won five dollars from him on the golf course, pontificates: these doctors are all a lot of quacks. I wouldn't trust a guinea pig to the whole college of physicians and surgeons. Look what they did to Smith. They cut him open, and he died ten years later. They don't know anything about what's going on inside a man. A bunch of fakes, I call 'em. Don't let one near me if I ever get sick."

Needless to say, all he is doing is letting off a broadside of blank shells. If he had a pain in his stomach that same evening, he'd have his wife on the phone pulling the doctor out of bed. Since however infallibility seems to speak in the person of the father, the children put doctors down as frauds whom they will avoid with all the concentrated craft of their youthful natures. In years to come, at another dinner table that same speech is likely to be repeated by a grown man who doesn't even recall that he is echoing the voice of his father.

Doctors have a normal place in the life of the child. They should not be built up to be made to seem magicians. They should not be pulled down to be made to seem ignorant frauds.

FOOD

It's a lucky man who moves through life with a normal appetite for food. If he can eat everything, he's twice blessed. If he has a pleasant curiosity about new and different food, he is likely to know quite thrilling adventures. If his digestion is one of the things he can dismiss as never requiring his attention, he probably also radiates a good disposition and a vibrant energy.

Now the normal, healthy appetite that is given to almost every child will remain normal and healthy if the parents cultivate, train, develop, where necessary curb, and always rightly direct it.

The child's chief lessons in correct eating are given to him by the examples of the parents themselves. For the love they bear their children parents must eat reasonably, with a real degree of relish, without gorging and yet with a frank appreciation of food. If parents say, "Eat your carrots," and then push their own carrots aside, the child will push his aside in exact imitation of his parents. If dad says, "But Popeye eats spinach," the child is unconvinced unless dad eats his spinach too.

The rightly trained child who eats everything has parents who eat everything.

I have been among families where the parents like so restricted a menu of foods that their sons and daughters regard with distaste every type of food but the few kinds that have recurred and recurred on the family table. Poor kids!

A child brought up to disdain all foods but those few items to which he is accustomed is going to be regarded as a bore when he dines out. When travelling, he is going to be a nuisance. In new surroundings he will be utterly without imagination. And whether his family is wealthy enough to disdain any food less rare and rich than caviar and mocking-birds' tongues, or hillbillies who starve to death if they can't get corn bread, molasses, and hog meat, the youngster has been deprived of the wide gamut of foods which God has prepared for the health and enjoyment of his children. For that crime against his health his parents are very largely responsible.

To the mother falls of course the tremendous assignment of dietician in chief to the family. It is her role to plan the

varied menus which according to her means and the needs of the family will bring to the table the widest variety of foods. Hers is the responsibility to see that the children learn to eat everything.

Indeed the simple rule of the family should be that anything which is fit to place on the family table is fit for anyone in the family to eat.

Fancy food, desserts, sweets, and other delicacies have their place. The sugar they contain is, as we all know, a power producer for the youthful body. These can come as a reward for the eating of the substantial food. "When you have eaten your vegetables, you may have your chocolate éclair. . . No spinach, no strawberry ice-cream."

But the parents, concretely the mother, early see to it that the candy bar between meals or the dessert piled up at the end of the meal does not become the substitute for the food the children need for their proper growth.

One morning in the course of my duties I dropped in at a most casual household shortly after breakfast time. Yes, they assured me, they had finished breakfast—all, that was, except the youngest daughter, and she had "gone out to get her breakfast". That sounded a little weird for a twelve-year-old. When the twelve-year-old returned, the sequel turned out to be weirder still. For her breakfast she had bought a bag of peanuts, three greasy doughnuts, an icecream cone, and a chocolate nut bar. Distributed over four days, these articles of food might have been reward for the eating of good breakfasts of fruit, cereal, milk, and eggs. As substitutes for real food they were simply destructive.

Food habits are formed in infancy and last through life. A terrible sin is committed against the health of the children if they

are not trained to eat everything that is wholesome, to have an open mind for food that is new to them, and to put aside forever the contempt for and shuddering revulsion against any food that may not up to this time have been included in their pitifully limited diet. Limited diets can nicely (or pitifully) be left to the rice-eating nations of the Orient.

CLEANLINESS

Though in recent years neglect on the part of parents has given the schools an excuse to take over the care of the body as well as the instruction of the mind, the care of the child's body is most emphatically the duty of the father and the mother.

Physical odours and their origins should be carefully explained to children as soon as they start to care for themselves. Amazingly enough children, both boys and girls, come into adulthood apparently unaware of this if parents fail to take care of what "even their best friends won't tell them". The effect of perspiration either on the body or on the clothes, the need for constant cleaning of the clothes, the use of gargles and, if necessary, of deodorants are subjects about which the child should learn early.

From the beginning the care of teeth is also part of standard routine. The individual toothbrush and gargle cup, the personal supply of tooth powder or paste are given to the child emerging from infancy and treated as part of his essential belongings.

PLAY

God and nature put into youngsters the love for play. That love exists, as we clearly understand, not merely for the sake of the fun they can get out of it but because exercise and games

are the most effective ways to develop muscles and co-ordination and the skilled use of hands and feet. Nature sees to it that the child does not walk if he can possibly run; nature is driving him to the building up of sinew. No child can resist the lure of a ball or a hoop or a chance to yell at the top of his lungs—with important results to arms and legs and lungs.

Even the natural instinct to play can be wisely guided and directed by the parents. Suppose they provide a sandbox for the little youngsters; this serves not only to keep the children quiet and content but actually to stimulate the creative, constructive impulse instinctive in all of us. As for gifts they can present the youngsters with sets that they use for building, from building blocks all the way up to the complicated steel construction sets. Thus the youngsters gain a real increase in skill with their hands and brains.

While games among the children themselves are natural enough, children's games in which the parents take part will stimulate even further the wholesome desire for play. No other game is so thrilling to children as one in which adults have a place. If dad takes his turn at bat, the sand-lot game takes on new zest. If mother comes out and cries, "Give me one of those rackets," all the children on the tennis court are instantly keyed to a new pitch of interest and to a new intensity of determination.

BODY FOR THE SOUL

In all this talk of the development of the body—whether through food, cleanliness, exercise, or play—we are thinking of the body and the soul, those partners which together make the complete and adequate human being. The horrible degradation of human beings who see in themselves only an animal

body has led to a cult of bodies, an ostentation about big muscles or the smooth lines of a beautiful figure, an appreciation like that accorded the strutting of a lion or the parading of a peacock. Children should early be taught that the body is secondary in importance to the soul and that the health of the body is important in order that the soul may function unimpeded. *A strong, vigorous, well-trained body can be a powerful asset.* It may mean more calm of mind, more opportunity for the enjoyment of life's richness. It can never be man's prime concern.

So the game is for the fun one gets out of it, for the delight of companionship, and for the development of bodily muscles and skill and the display of camaraderie, charity, good sportsmanship. The matter of winning is entirely of secondary importance. Conceit about one's muscles or beauty or ability to bat a ball is petty and small and a little below the dignity of a human being.

THE CHILD'S MIND

When we come to the parents' care of the child's mind, we are of course thinking of the days that precede formal education. For the mind, like the body, begins to develop at birth. And in the case of the mind, as of the body, the first few years are of really disproportional importance.

First we can start with the things that parents should not put into their children's minds. Actually in many cases parents pour—quite unconsciously but with painfully lasting results—into the minds and souls of their children weaknesses and limitations of which they themselves should be ashamed.

NO FEARS

Rule one is quite simple: *Never give a child a fear.*

I suppose every man or woman in the world has some sort of personal fear—whether of heights or the dark or cats or ghosts or the policeman or crowds or fire or the dead. Parents transfer these fears of theirs, sometimes deliberately and sometimes without thinking, to their children. It's too bad that a child should have to start off in life with an equipment of dreads and fears and instinctive terrors.

How parents themselves act toward their fears, quite as much as what they say about them, leaves a lasting impression on youngsters. If a mother shudders every time a cat comes near her, she is likely to find her little daughter shuddering at the sight of a kitten. If a father talks in all solemnity of the ghosts that lurk in dark corridors, even if he may think this only a particularly fruity joke, his boy may dread dark corridors for many a long year.

So out of love of their children as well as out of a desire for their personal happiness parents should try to get rid of their own fears. Where the children are concerned, they should with the most conscious effort try to hide the things of which they are afraid.

I have known boys, well developed and otherwise normal, to scream in terror when a dog brushed against them. Their parents were afraid of dogs. I've heard from girls the ancient legend of the woman who wakes and finds a cat resting on her chest; and as she cries out in fright, the cat buries its claws in the woman's throat. The story is one of the oldest of old wives' tales. It has served nonetheless to place those girls eternally in terror of cats.

Parents will deliberately go about frightening children in

order to make them behave. They may get a temporary result, a sort of cowed silence; but the lasting effects are pretty bad.

"If you don't stop crying, the bogeyman will get you," mothers have said, probably from the dawn of history. Anything will serve: ghosts, devils, "a horribe man who jumps out on bad little children," even God as a terrible threat.

Yes; the father himself becomes a bogeyman. "You just wait until your father comes home and I tell him how you've been behaving. He'll fix you." So when dad arrives and cheerily calls to his children, he sees them scurry away to hide in a closet. He, poor chap, wonders why his children act afraid of him, especially since it is all he can do to force himself to speak sternly to them.

Parents develop in their children lifelong dreads. "Stop crying, or I'll go off and turn out the light and leave you in the dark." The mother will hit that word dark as if it were an awful, palpable, living monster waiting to leap out of the corridor and suffocate the child. "There are terrible giants who eat up little children who are bad like you," the child is solemnly warned, and he has something else to be afraid of.

Or in their casual conversation parents admit that they are terribly afraid of being burned alive, of being buried alive, of being drowned, or falling off high buildings—and the children grow up afraid of fire, of even a closed door, of any approach to a body of water, of any height above five feet.

Sometimes it will happen that one brave parent and one naturally timid one will result in the death of a great many fears. There is my own case. I had a father who was afraid of nothing and a mother who was timid about almost everything. My father bolstered up my courage in a dozen ways. He loved dogs and encouraged me to pat any strange dog I

met—while my mother stood by, momentarily expecting me to lose a hand or an ear. He always pretended it was fun to hunt burglars, and he made a great show of keeping his revolver under a carelessly tossed sock beside his bed—while any slightest night noise about the house roused my mother to a sleepless vigil.

As a result of this joint training I was afraid of almost nothing. When mother and I returned in the late afternoon, she inserted the key in the lock, opened the door cautiously, and then sent me on ahead. After I had joyfully explored the house, looking with genuine hope for a burglar or a ghost, I called downstairs that all was clear; then and only then did she enter the house.

There are enough real things in the world to be afraid of without parents' bequeathing to a child a heritage of their fears. A wise respect for buzz saws, the devil, speed in any form, the law, and God is all part of the beginning of wisdom. None of these has anything to do with the unreasonable terrors that can twist and distort the soul of a child.

SUPERSTITIONS

Most superstitions, I honestly believe, were invented by women to keep men from doing things that upset the household. "It's bad luck to spill salt on the tablecloth," women say. But then they prefer to have their dinner tables neat and clean. "Don't sit on a bed; it's awful luck," said the housewife, for the reason that to sit on a bed badly musses it. "It's bad luck to break a mirror," she continued. And who around a house chiefly uses mirrors? "Don't drop a knife or a fork. . . Don't knock over chairs. . . Don't rock a rocker unless someone is sitting in it, or a death will follow. . . Don't let a bird fly into a room; that's a sure sign someone will die."

All these things upset the routine of well ordered house. A nice convenient "curse" attached to them kept men on the alert to prevent their occurrence.

Parents have a way of teaching children superstitions that often affect their lives. Most superstitions are just silly, like thinking that horseshoes bring luck. Some of them are just matters of caution, like not walking under a ladder—from which a bucket of paint or a carpenter might drop onto one's head.

The chief fault of these superstitions lies in a destruction of the logical sense. They establish an entirely false connection of cause and effect.

So we youngsters used to search the highways for horseshoes. When we found one, that was wonderful luck. The more nails in the horseshoe, the more luck we were going to have. But in the hanging of the horseshoe an exact ritual had to be observed: The shoe must be hung with the points up, otherwise the good luck would pour out and be lost.

There is no possible connection, as anyone can see, between horseshoes and nails, the way of hanging them up, and good or bad luck. An utterly false connection is established. Logic is booted out the window.

PRE-NATAL NONSENSE

Children are presented by their parents with the most amazing lot of nonsense. There are the stories of pre-natal influence for example. If a mother is frightened by a fire, the child is born with a birthmark like a flame on his face; if the mother is alarmed by a wild animal, she is likely to give birth to a monster.

I once asked a great baby specialist about these stories which I, like most other people, had learned and implicitly believed.

"I made a very careful study of it," he replied, in a heavy German accent that gave emphasis to his disdain. "I have delivered thousands of babies. Never once have I seen a case where the mother's fright affected the baby. Such nonsense! such nonsense! The most you can say is that if the mother is frightened at the zoo by a bear, that baby will be born with bare feet."

CRITICAL HABITS

In the main superstitions can be viewed with a bit of condescending smile, though fears should always be regarded as real perils and dangers. Toward the critical habits passed on by parents to their children however there can be no attitude other than that of real repugnance.

Yet the critical talk of parents creates in the children like attitudes that often last for life.

There are parents who in the presence of the children criticise the whole of life. "I didn't ask to be born," growls the father, after a bad day in the office, "so why should I be thankful to God for life?" In later years the child grown to manhood will repeat this taunt word for word, in perfect echo of his father.

"Oh life is all such a mess! I'm sick of it," the mother cries, when things become too heavy for her. The children listen, their sober, intent little faces lifted to drink in her pessimism. And their souls are soured even before they are quite sure what she means or why she distorts her face in so frightening a fashion.

Perpetual grouches pass their grouches on to their children. Constant criticism breeds criticism. I have seen too many children whose bitterness toward life was merely a rebottling

of the poison distilled by their parents, who as a matter of fact may really not have meant what they were saying.

SUSPICIONS

So the careless talk of parents about government will in the children's mind breed a suspicion of and contempt for government.

"Did I ever put it over on that traffic officer!" mother boasts, after she has told how she wept and cajoled her way out of a parking ticket. She has incidentally made the children contemptuous, not of an individual policeman, but of that mysterious thing called law.

"Oh the Church is always talking about money... The Church is so doggone old-fashioned. Why doesn't it become up to date? ... Believe me, I'm not going to help that bishop with his charity drive. He has a lot more money than I have; let him take care of the poor himself... Why do we have to have expensive churches like that? Seems to me the money could be used for lots of better purposes than to build a monument to that pastor of ours."

Then the unblushing criticism of the priests and the sisters: "What an awful sermon! That man talks like an illiterate. I could give a better sermon with one hand tied behind my back. Anyhow all he can talk about is money." The youngsters, intent and alertly listening, know only that their parents are taking the hide off someone they had thought pretty important. Religion to them is symbolised in the person of the priest. When parents are bitter about him, the children's whole attitude toward religion takes a terrific fall. A critical mood is born in their souls.

DISTRUST

It is quite possible that the critical attitude of parents can breed in children an almost total distrust of humanity. I know young men and women who sneer at democracy or at all politicians, who deny the sincerity of charity workers or the disinterestedness of religious people simply because they have received as one of their heritages the eternal carping of their parents.

Whatever a mother's and a father's disparaging opinion of people or institutions, they are wise to reserve those opinions for each other's ears alone. It is too bad that children should be poisoned early in life by cynicism, criticism, bitterness poured out at a time when the youngster can make few distinctions and will fail to differentiate between a grouch and a reasonable comment, the dislike for some individual and the condemnation of an entire race or class of society or institution.

ALERTNESS

Of the many things that parents can directly place in the minds of their children, let's take a few now—and more later.

I should like to place high on the list Alertness, and with deliberate purpose I use the capital A.

For as one who has had to deal much with young people and who has faced a good many audiences and more than a few classes, let me say that there is hardly another natural quality that seems more important.

The alert child is the alive child. The alert child is the one who learns, who wants to advance, who has a real hunger for truth and beauty and whatever falls within the range of his observation and mental grasp.

Now the child's own alertness is in direct relation to the alertness the child has observed in his mother and his father. If they are enthusiastic for wide variety of things, he is likely to be so enthusiastic. Indeed their interests are likely to be his. Their lack of interests will result in blind spots in his own mind which probably will never be cured.

MATERNAL HERITAGE

Let's take the negative for a moment. I happened to have had a mother who was totally disinterested in the country, in animals, or in anything that grew in the soil. To the end she thought that all flowers were brought directly from florists. Occasionally she attempted to raise one of the hardier plants, a palm or a rubber plant; but it died promptly and with suspicious dispatch. She regarded the country as a horrible place where women were worked to death, where there were none of the joys of life, and where the night was filled with hideous noises—all frightening, all sinister.

The result on me is a complete lack of interest in anything outside the city's high walls. With the years I have come to appreciate a beautiful scene. I love—because I have personally cultivated the love—a summer sky, the charm of flowing water, a rolling hill. But anything that grows in soil is an utter mystery to me and, what's worse, a mystery that has never seemed worth the solving.

But my mother had the keenest interest in people. She found them absorbingly interesting. And so do I. She loved books, and her life was surrounded by them. There too I am in measure like her. She adored music. That love too she graciously woke in my soul.

It is possible for a genius in the family to develop specialised

interests that his parents have never known. But his general alertness, his wide-awake mind and trained senses are almost inevitably the gift of his parents.

So children can be deeply grateful if their parents are alert. If they walk through the world seeing the things around them and talking with interest about what has happened, about the people they have met, the conversations that have taken place, the new things that impinged upon their senses, the books they have read, and the music and plays they have enjoyed, the children will inevitably find their own minds waking up, their own interests being stimulated to responsive activity.

ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

That is why parents are smart if they encourage their children to ask questions. Even, as I indicated before, if the youngsters seem to pay no attention to the answers and ask the same questions over and over again, the mere fact that they ask the questions is a hopeful sign. At least they are alive. At least their eyes are wandering and their ears are open.

STIMULATING INTEREST

Parents can stimulate this alertness by pointing out the things that interest them. I know a charming mother who loves nature deeply. She simply took her youngsters walking with her in the woods. She pointed out the growing flowers. She called them each by name. As she looked for birds and their nests, she encouraged the children to find them before she could discover them. She made her youngsters conscious of the development of the year, the feel of the seasons, the signs that indicated nature's growth and progress. She loved these things herself, and she thought that it was her privilege to in-

duct her children into the happy mysteries. She did not wait until they could join the scouts and under a scout master first be awakened to the miracle that is the world God made. She certainly did not sit back and wait till they were in a high-school botany class.

Games often add to this interest. We youngsters played authors and thus learned the names of great books before we had had the privilege of reading them. A boy who starts collecting stamps—or almost anything else—has his eyes and mind opened to the vast wealth of interesting things that await the vital person.

How smart and foresighted are the mother and the father who wake to alert interest in as wide a variety of things as possible the child committed to them! and how wonderfully lucky the child!

APPRECIATIONS

From the parents comes a fine, instinctive appreciation of what is good and true. Despite all the courses in aesthetics, I often wonder if one can be taught to appreciate the beautiful in any other way than by the seeing of it through the eyes of people who already love it. If a mother loves good poetry and reads it to her children, they'll need no rules to make them know a beautiful sonnet from a verse form that clothes sentimental slush. If the parents select good pictures to hang on their walls and walk with the children through an art gallery, pausing reverently or even excitedly before the really lovely paintings and statues, the wise rules of the critical writers will later merely confirm in the children the instincts their parents gave them. If they have with their parents heard good music, whether the better broadcasts, the finer records of instrumental or

vocal, music, however amateurishly presented, they will in years to come still love good music and willingly sink themselves down into its refreshing charm.

From the conduct and approval of their parents children come to know most effectively what is morally good. From the response and selection of those parents they know what is beautiful and sincere and genuine. They will not easily be taken in later on by the morally evil, the ugly, the fake, the false, the maudlin.

SKILLS

There are great sweeping skills that a person learns only in early years. There is for example the skill in listening. That comes from the child's watching how his parents listen to the questions he asks and how they bend their attention to the comments and queries of each other. There is the skill in conversation itself, which is developed at the dinner table, in the living room, in the car as it rolls along the road, at the picnic when all are relaxed in the soft grass. There are right ways and wrong ways of treating people, doing a favour, accepting a gift, carrying through a job, acting in civilised society. All the memorised rules in the world will later on merely give the adult a stiff formality and self-conscious clumsiness—unless he has early seen these things gracefully done by his parents and has in unconscious imitation learned to do them himself.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The whole emotional development of the child rests primarily with the parents.

I have already referred with emphasis to the effect that the love they see around them has upon children. That is

much, much more than merely the atmosphere to warm them and the cushion to protect them from the hard world. It is the stimulus that awakens in them right and wholesome love. The love of the parents is supposed to awaken a complementary love in the children. The interest parents show in their children begets a dear intimacy that must be gained in infancy, or it can scarcely be gained at all.

If they clearly expect a return of love from their children, parents will get it. When however the children spontaneously and in a burst of natural affection show the parents love and the signs of love, the parents must respond at once. Otherwise the emotion dies or is driven back as by a blow, to hide in the frightened soul.

I am amazed when I find how many fathers never kiss their children and how many positively brush the child off when he wants to show affection. It is even more surprising to find mothers who come and go without any sign of love given to or demanded of their children. Quite aside from the happiness the parents are missing, these failures to respond will mean that the souls of the children will grow lonely, timid chilly; and what is even more perilous, later on the children's affection which should have poured itself naturally upon the parents, will flow out unrestrainedly upon someone who may be far from being worthy of that love.

CO-OPERATION

The spirit of co-operation is something that the child learns in the days before ever he enters primary school.

At this point I could begin a dissertation (I shall avoid it) on the loneliness and the cramped character of an only child. The cruellest thing that supposedly good parents can do to

their child is deliberately to deny him brothers and sisters or to space the children by such long periods that there are wide stretches of years between them. I am not talking now of sin or of evil practices; I am talking merely of the unfairness of this to the child himself.

Even small families of two or three children may constitute a real handicap to the youngsters.

Man, according to the ancient truism, is a social being. Half the success of life depends on one's ability to get along with one's peers. When Dale Carnegie hit the bull's-eye with *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, he was merely offering men and women a guide to something they knew to be essential to their life's success and personal happiness.

Where else in the world could children learn co-operation as they can learn it with their brothers and sisters, in the same family? If there are several children of approximately the same ages, they have to get along together. They learn to share toys and collaborate in games. They engage in a wide variety of collaborative and collective projects. They learn to interchange clothes and luxuries. They even develop consideration in their use of the bathroom—how to get in and out and perform a toilet without holding up the rest of the family. In fact the children in the family will act as little emery wheels, rubbing off the rough edges and polishing down the social conduct of one another.

THE SAD ONLY CHILD

A solitary child on the other hand lives, not with his peers, but with his elders. In a very small family there is no need for collaboration. The only child does not learn the art of getting along with people. He may turn out in later life to

be excellent with his superiors and gracious with those under him; he is always at a loss in his dealings with those of exactly his own age and class.

Over the family the parents should, like presiding geniuses, watch this developing co-operation between the children. They are arbiters of strict justice when the need arises. They reward the democratic spirit as it manifests itself. They punish regretfully but inexorably the violations of rights.

In all this they are giving their children a highly developed social sense and an ability to get along with people, faculties that cannot possibly be developed in small, selfish families.

COMRADES

When the child grows a little older, he is not keen to have his parents brooding over his games and parties, especially when he is sharing them with his friends. But during the early days parents are wise to keep without intrusion an eye on the child as he plays with his friends. For here again co-operation and comradeship are being developed. The parents must see that the child does not grab, does not hoard his toys and playthings, learns the all-important game of give and take, and develops an ability to get along with people.

Hence the fallacy of siding with one's own children against their playmates. The commonest course of youngsters when they are in their own homes is to run to their parents with every fancied affront or selfishness their companions manifest. The commonest instinct of the parents is to jump to the conclusion that their own children are good little angels who are beset by the cruelty and rapacity and complete lack of good manners manifested by the neighbours' brats.

And clinging to that adjective for one more statement The commonest mistake of parents is to side with their own

children against their children's playmates and to run to settle the squabble with the might of superior size and authority. Quite aside from the fact that *your* child is quite as likely to be in the wrong as is *their* child, your child is likely to believe that he is always right, that his selfishness is quite forgivable and the other child's defence of his own property merely greedy, and that when he can't handle a situation he has only to call in the divine might that is yours, and the balance of power is swiftly thrown his way.

If the other children are using a mechanical train to beat out the brains of your child, you are quite justified to interfere. Or if you realise that your child is so clearly the underdog that his rights and dignity and sheer thread of life are being cracked completely by a young monster his superior in weight, muscle, and reach you may take a hand.

Since the scene of action is your own house however, you are wise to use the occasion as a lesson in unselfishness. If you can stay out of the squabble and let the children themselves handle their problems, that is ideal. But consistently to side with your youngster against the children who visit and who play with him is along the same line as siding with the children against their teachers—a horrible form of youthful mismanagement to which we shall come again in the course of our peregrinations.

PATRIOTISM

Tied close together and originating in the home is the respect for authority and that rational yet deep emotional love of country we know as patriotism. Parents and patriotism come close together. Here again the virtues they impress upon their children are much more a matter of what they do than of what

they say. They speak with affection of the country. They do this without breeding little chauvinists; they do not speak contemptuously of other countries. Early lessons are given the children by the parents' respectful attitude toward the Flag, which, like the crucifix, has a place on the walls of the nursery and elsewhere in the house.

Parents show a frank gratitude toward their country in the hearing of the children. If they must crab about the taxes, they crab when the children are not around. If they must damn the state officials and pillory their dishonesty, stupidity, and general ineptitude, they are wise to do this after the children are in bed and asleep.

Parallel with the children's introduction to the saints should come their introduction to the great people and the stories of their deeds. The parents' own love for their country is soon reproduced in the love the children feel for a land which, whatever the defects of the governors of the minute or the speculations of the party in power, deserves a deep love and a lifelong devotion.

AUTHORITY

This attitude is of course something that leads naturally into the children's respect for authority. Since this is a virtue which is essential for effective democracy, I ask the reader's pardon if I come back to it at intervals throughout this book. Democracies do not fail because people do not know how to command; they fail because people are unwilling to obey or have simply lost the knack of respecting even the officials they themselves have elected and the laws they themselves have put into effect.

So from the beginning parents can simply insist on the general principle that where there are more than two people

together one somewhat ; couch their explanation. Or they have waited so give order they are embarrassed about the whole idea. Or army, have the shyness which comes from the realisation that child may associate what they tell him with their own experiences. It is not easy to face an adolescent's questioning doctor that seems to say, "But how do you know all that?"

So while priests and religious should be spared the necessity of their giving youngsters instructions in sex, their duty may well include that of teaching the parents how to teach their own children. If the parents then fail to handle the problem, priests and religious may ultimately find the task forced upon them. Nonetheless the first effort of priests and religious should be, not to reach the children, but to reach the mothers and fathers with the technique necessary to bring the needed information to their boys and girls.

START EARLY AND CONTINUE

A first warning to parents must necessarily be this: *Sex instruction and training rightly begin with infancy*. It continues during the days of the child's development. It should be fairly well established by the time of the child's adolescence. Certainly the friendly, natural relationship between parents and children should be established by that time, otherwise there is great danger of that relationship's never being established.

I doubt if once adolescence is reached a father or a mother can start the sex instruction of a child. (Forgive me if I keep repeating all this.) The minute the subject is approached, the adolescent child, now aware of at least the preliminaries of sex, grows acutely self-conscious. If he has had any experiences, even guiltless ones, he suspects that his parents know about them and are talking because they suspect him. He wants to

run away. In fact he may dodge with an effectiveness that leaves the parent completely thwarted.

ADOLESCENCE TOO LATE

Even more difficult is the situation of the parents. They are embarrassed at the necessity of their talking to the well developed boy or girl. How much does the child know? What will he think? How will he react? Will he, all the while that the parent is talking, be thinking: "Did all this happen to you?" Since the relationship between parents and children is intimately bound up with sex, the parents have the choking inhibiting feeling that their children are associating all they are told with their own father and mother.

If the parents are plain-spoken when they talk to adolescents, they are afraid of shocking or disturbing or stimulating the curiosity of the children. If they use veiled terms and soften the expressions and indulge in wide circumlocutions, they leave the children more muddled than they were at the start. All the time the parents keep wondering how much the children themselves have picked up—from the gutter or elsewhere—and how far their minds and emotions are already seething in misconceptions and falsehoods.

I repeat: I sincerely doubt that most parents who put off this interview until adolescence or even later will do more than make a horrible job of it; they themselves will blush and will make their children feel like running away and jumping off the nearest bridge.

Some years ago this whole situation of the father's trying to instruct his adolescent son was made the subject of a dramatic scene. The reaction of the adults in the audience was clear proof that they knew the hopelessness of their saving to

adolescents: "Let's sit down, and I'll tell you the facts of life."

Hence I repeat again: *Sex instruction must be begun when the baby starts to ask questions.* If this instruction is delayed, parents will find that it can't be given.

Utterly mistaken is the parent who starts, no matter what the child's age, with an air of, "This is very awful. I'm sorry I have to tell you this. It is too bad to have to destroy your innocence. But there are terrible facts that you must learn somehow, and you had better learn them from me."

Parents dealing with the matters of sex should treat them as a natural and very beautiful process of human development. Virtuous, strong sex life is part of God's plan for the human race. Its operations rank with those connected with the digestion of good food, with the exercise needed for proper growth and development, with the care of the health, with proper hygiene. In this honest fashion the parents should treat the subject when they discuss it.

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

air

Before a parent takes up the details of sex instruction, he should realise that every child goes through a series of perfectly normal developments. Little boys and little girls are in the main asexual. Boys are not interested in girls. Girls are disdainful of boys.

Yet even at this early period it is possible for children to be sexually advanced and often extremely curious. Hence a bad little boy or girl in a crowd may easily induce youngsters into sexual knowledge that normally at that age they would not have. The so-called *doctor games*, *artist games*, or things of that sort may lead a child to curiosity through improper exposure.

In these days there has been a terrific drive on little children in the earliest grades by the dealers of pornographic literature, which in the form of comic books and cartoons are geared to the intelligence and emotions of the smallest children. An evil nurse may sometimes stimulate prematurely the sexual life of a child simply to keep the child quiet.

Parents then, though they can regard innocence as the normal lot of little children, are still doing only their simple duty when they watch their children's playmates, are extremely careful in their choice of nurses, and make sure that stimulating information or the filth prepared by devils disguised as men don't fall into the youngsters' hands.

ADOLESCENCE DAWNS

With the coming of adolescence the entire orientation of the child changes. His sexual organs develop. With that development his curiosity rises very sharply. The girl becomes interested, often quite innocently, in boys. She likes to be liked; she is pleased when boys pay attention to her.

Much more violently is the boy stirred to curiosity. His emotional and passionate nature awakes with a rush.

Both boys and girls suddenly feel the heat of temptation. Imaginings and desires rush through their minds in indecent parade. They begin to feel the start of physical temptations.

Now if parents have prepared the child quietly and beautifully for all this, the child faces his new state of life calmly and with courage. On the other hand if the child is suddenly plunged into the change without warning, a variety of things may happen to stir his mind to turmoil.

Not knowing that his or her experiences are the common

lot of mankind and womankind, the child feels himself wretchedly alone. He is alarmed. He soon comes to wonder if he is not abnormal and queer. He thinks that perhaps he is physically defective, on the verge of insanity.

Many a child comes to look with suspicion on his parents. He reasons: "These are horrible temptations. I wonder if I would have them if my father had not been a bad man. Can it be that mother was not a good woman and that I have these temptations because of her sins?"

If he has been properly prepared for the coming of these experiences, he is not alarmed. He realises that others have had them, are having them, will continue to have them as long as human nature is human nature. He knows he is not abnormal but perfectly sound. Least of all does he blame his physical and mental problems on some secret sins of his parents.

THE LITTLE CHILD'S QUESTIONS

As the little child grows into curiosity, even when he is very young his first contact with sex may be the perfectly natural question, "Where do babies come from?"

Now there is really nothing else more beautiful in nature than the origin of babies in their mothers' bodies, babies nurtured by their parents' blood and held in the mothers' bodies as in a sanctuary.

When the child first asks that question, he is in the most wonderful mental and emotional state to receive the truth. He has no sex stimulation. He is very thoughtless and pays little attention to answers given him. He takes casually any answer that he gets and drops the matter right there without feeling the prod of further curiosity.

So quite calmly the mother may answer his question:

"Babies come from their mothers. When you were a spect little baby, you were in my body, right under my hear are carried you there for a long time. Then when you were a the little baby, you came out of my body, and I held you in the arms."

The normal child reacts to that really lovely and factual recital with an inattentive "Oh!" He turns back to his toys without another thought on the matter. The explanation is adequate and beautiful. He likes the idea. He is quite satisfied. Moreover he is likely to forget all but the fact that he was told something important which later on he recalls without embarrassment.

One youngster that was told in the calm, matter-of-fact fashion where babies come from ran to his mother a few days later.

"Mother," he said, "do you know what little Willie wanted to do? He wanted to tell me where babies came from. And I told him, 'Old stuff'!"

PARENTS' OWN IDEALS

Most important in the parents is the dignity and beauty of their own ideals about sex.

For this it is necessary that modern parents, who live in the midst of pagan standards of morality, reconsider and re-burnish the standards and attitudes which they should have toward sex.

To state it simply, we know that:

A. God could have created human beings as He created Adam and Eve, by a direct act of creation.

B. Instead He determined to share here as elsewhere

lot of down powers with His human sons and daughters. He edly self was free, so He gave them free will; He was intelligent, is nHe gave them intelligence; He was eternal, so He gave them phymortality; He had the power to create human beings, so He shared that power with men and women.

C. Hence the thing we call sex is merely that creative power by which men and women help God to people the world with His sons and daughters and to give heaven its immortal citizens.

D. Mothers and fathers have in consequence a share in God's divine paternity. They are cocreators with God in the making of a man.

E. Because the responsibilities of fatherhood and the pains of motherhood are hard burdens, God repays His sons and daughters for their aid in the creation of His children. He gives to sex physical pleasure. He surrounds sex with the consolations and joys of love. He makes men and women attractive to each other. He asks them to build homes in which they will through peace and security and the union of souls and bodies provide a safe place in which to bear and rear and educate His earthly sons and daughters.

F. To show His sons and daughters the sanctity of all this, He lifts marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. His Church reminds its members that though a marriage is ratified at the altar it is not completed or consummated until the married couple have rightly exercised their great creative act.

G. Inside of marriage men and women may offer to God their sex relations as they offer Him any other noble act of their day.

H. Hence through marriage the life of the human race-

continues. Men and women should have the highest respect for themselves as the bearers of the germ of life. Men are potential fathers. Women are the shrines and fountains of the future.

I. Impurity is in consequence horrible because it is a violation and a betrayal of this sacred creative power. It takes the pleasure connected with sex and does not give God—under safe and sanctified conditions—the children that He has ordained can be given Him in no other way. It imperils the whole life of the future. It is less a sin against God than a sin against the human race, since it corrupts the fathers of the future and renders debased and unclean the women who should be the mothers of wholesome, pure, strong children.

PURE LOVE OF PARENTS

Once more I come back to the importance of the love which the mother and the father display in the presence of their children. The children can find this love the reassuring guarantee; they can never quite forget that love is a pure and noble thing. They sense, without their knowing how or why, the respect which their mother and father have for each other. They later come, when they know more about it, to be absolutely sure that their parents' use of sex was always dignified, noble, pure, natural, according to God's plan. They feel that love is something very splendid. "Look what it meant to my mother and father," they argue.

So from infancy love takes on beautifully reassuring associations. The children are bound to think of it as a beautiful and inspiring thing. For they remember the pure, strong love in the eyes and lives of their parents.

BOOKS AND MOVIES

Parents who are interested in the purity of their children will be very careful about what books and magazines come into the house. Children page through them even before they can read.

"Why," a little girl asked, in my hearing, "are the women on the covers of those detective-story magazines always dressed like that?"

In repugnance she pointed to the shocking criminal woman half naked and sprawling luridly and alluringly across the cover of the magazine her father was reading. He was interested merely in the yarns, which were rehashes of stale murders and counterfeitings. She was distressed by the shameless woman flaunted at her from the cover.

Plays and motion pictures make a profound impression upon little children, who drink in what they see before they have any idea of its significance.

Once I was at home with a friend of my college days. During the course of the afternoon his little daughter, just about six years old, came back from the picture show at which she had been parked for the afternoon. She herself was the picture of innocence, fit subject for a photographer who might want to do in natural colours a study called Guiltlessness.

"How was the picture?" her father asked, in perfunctory query.

Believe me, there was nothing perfunctory about her answer.

"Oh," she answered, suddenly transformed into a little actress, "it was wonderful. It was called 'Dancing Daughter'. I loved it. It was all about two sisters. One of them was such a silly, good girl. And was she ever stupid! She didn't have-

any boys coming to see her. She just sat home and sewed.

"But her sister—oh she was keen! She was so pretty. All the boys were crazy about her. One night she came home from a party. She ran upstairs to her sister's room. Her sister was in bed. She took off her clothes. And daddy, she had the prettiest underclothes on. She told all about the boys who were crazy for her. Well the other sister got mad. She got out of bed. She put on a dress with oh such a low neck. She was going to be pretty and get the boys to like her too..."

By this time I was fairly choking, and the father was as red as a stop light.

"I think that will do," he said. "You told it very well. Now run and drink your milk."

She ran, once more innocence on the "lam", while her father lighted his cigarette in thoughtful silence.

"Looks as if I'd better do a little supervising of the youngster's afternoons," he said.

There was really no need for me to agree.

THE VISITORS TO THE HOME

If children are influenced by the magazines and films that lie within reach of their curiosity, they can be even more profoundly affected by the type of friends the parents bring home, the conversations at table, the stories that are told in their presence. They instinctively recognise loose conduct. They are shocked, as I indicated before, even by the dirty story or the suggestive song the meaning of which they do not understand.

THE CHURCH'S LAWS

Very closely allied to all this is the attitude the children hear their parents take toward the Church's laws regarding sex problems. All the Church decrees on the subjects of love, marriage, divorce, birth control, and kindred subjects spring directly from the Church's love of life and its determination to protect that life against the beast in man.

Hence when in the presence of the children parents speak contemptuously or rebelliously of these laws, they are really weakening the children's attitude toward purity itself. Children are quite naturally shocked by the successive polygamy which is called divorce. They don't understand and are revolted by that transition of husbands and wives from one bed to another. They are often definitely repelled by the mere idea of birth control. Parents are wise to remember all this when they speak of these subjects in the presence of children.

A young woman once came to see me, a sick, twisted look on her face. She was tense, her nerves on edge, her jaw white with emotion.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"I shall never respect my parents again," the girl replied, hardly unclenching her teeth. "Last night when I opened the drawer in my mother's dresser, I found a package of contraceptives. I couldn't have believed it of her. Something of my love for her and for my father died at that moment. I can't respect them again."

Apparently it takes a good deal of adult rationalising to make the unnatural things which are divorce and birth control seem justified. Children see them more clearly and rightly.

Beyond that when the parents practise birth control, their children are likely to feel the aura of selfishness it casts. They--

come to wonder, as time goes on, why there are not more children in the family. They hear about birth control. They begin to question in their own minds. Often they condemn their own parents. Then if they find proof that their suspicions are justified, their condemnation may be bitter and lasting.

MOTHERS' IDEALS

A mother can however consciously develop in her young son a chivalrous respect for women. If she seems to expect him to be her protective escort, if she sets herself as the high standard for other women, he will respond.

A young man of my friendship brought home a young lady with whom he was infatuated. Thinking his mother was out of the room, he made violent and undignified love to the girl. He did not realise that his mother was seeing in a mirror what he was doing. She said nothing at the time. When the girl left, his mother stood before him very quietly.

"Son," she said, and her voice left no slightest doubt that she meant what she said, "never again in my house will you treat a girl like that. Evidently you forget that when you act cheaply and indecently to a girl you are throwing a direct insult at me. I don't see how you can pretend to love and respect me if you have a contemptuous attitude toward any other woman."

He long remembered that rebuke.

FATHERS' IDEALS

The conduct of the father toward women also profoundly affects children. It means a lot to the ideals they will hold if they see their father respectful to his wife, his mother, his sisters. They are keen to note the attitude he takes toward

the women who visit the house. Quickly they ~~note~~ any amorous or suggestive or familiar gestures. They regard such actions as treason to their mother. They are repelled by the faint suggestion of weakness on his part.

If on the other hand he is chivalrous, friendly, protective and the gentleman, in no slightest way demanding, familiar, inclined to paw or to expect familiarities, the boys take their cue from that conduct. The girls are lifted in their own esteem by the high regard they see him display toward all women.

PROTECTIVE ATTITUDE

From infancy boys should be expected to manifest a protective attitude toward women. That boy is lucky who has a younger sister toward whom he can display that protective instinct. He is twice lucky if his mother simply takes such an attitude for granted from the start. That same standard he will then much more easily transfer toward other boys' sisters later on.

The good manners demanded by a mother make a fine prelude to the purity of her son. If he rises when a woman enters the room, if he is taught to treat older women with courtesy, if he opens doors for them and carries bundles for them, he is really being trained in that Christian treatment of women which seems germane to purity.

RESPECT FOR WOMEN

The young girl's self-respect is one of the strong safeguards of her purity. Here again the mother's conduct and the father's attitudes are powerful determinants. Every girl models herself on her mother. She clothes her soul according to the fashions that seem to suit her mother. If the mother has a

high self-respect, if she allows no rudeness or vulgarity in her presence, if she accepts from men only fine friendship and admiring regard, the daughter will think that the proper course to follow.

The girl is often puzzled by the male members of her family. She is pleased when her father and her brothers are exacting in her regard. She is flattered when the menfolk expect her escorts to be high type.

"I don't like that young man, daughter; he's not up to your standard" is fatherly advice that may make a grown daughter flare up and strike back in resentment; it is likely to make a younger girl think happily that her father is concerned for her welfare. Girls are instinctively pleased when their brothers warn them away from this young man or that one "because he's not the kind you ought to be travelling around with".

TELL THEM THE TRUTH

The first time that children ask, "Where do babies come from?" the answer should be given to them honestly, as I have indicated before. In this first answer there is no need for amplification. The child is only mildly curious. He wants only a swift and general reply. Anything further would bore him. Besides with the casual memory he possesses at that time, most of what is told him rolls right off the surface of his mind—or rather rolls down into one of the soft brain ruts, where it remains unnoticed until some circumstance reminds him of the reassuring fact that lies there.

But the fact that he has been told without hesitation and with transparent truth dulls his curiosity. He loses interest in something that has no more mystery about it. When later on he hears incorrect or half-correct or smutty information from

an alien source, he knows the truth and has the protection of the truth against the lies and dirt.

NO SHOCK; NO SURPRISE

For any question asked, the parent should have a calm, unemotional answer.

"What does such and such a word mean?" the child will ask, practically slapping the parent's face with a simply revolting word made up of small repellent letters.

Mastering any slightest sign of surprise or alarm, the parent explains: "That's an unpleasant word that nice people don't use. Only nasty people with dirty minds ever say it. You see, it means..." and the parent in as delicate language as possible goes on to explain. If the word is merely one of the "toilet room", body-function words, the explanation is easy enough. If the word is obscene, a bit of circumlocution may be necessary.

"Dirty little boys and girls, who have no respect for themselves, sometimes do dirty things. They are very immodest. They don't take care of themselves. That word means a very bad and unpleasant action which my fine little son (or daughter) never need come in contact with. You run away from garbage cans or dead dogs. So just run away from nasty words like that."

If when the child grows older the subject comes up again, or if the subject is approached when the child has arrived at adolescence, the explanation can be much more complete.

NO HUMOUR OR RIDICULE

In the whole discussion of sex questions any slightest touch of humour is out. The parent should be entirely cheerful in his or her replies. But the youngster won't see anything re-

motely funny either in his question or in the answer given. In fact a sense of humour about almost anything develops in the child only after adolescence is far progressed. A sense of humour about sex is denied, thank God, to youngsters until temptations to sin have advanced far.

Anything like ridicule for a question's having been asked or contempt either for the question or the questioner is fatal. The question, be it ever so ridiculous, must be received in all seriousness. The question, be it ever so vulgar or shocking, must bring from the parent not a wince, or a sign of revulsion, or any response other than that of respectful consideration.

SIMPLE OCCASIONS

Often occasions for basic explanations and precautionary advice arise out of the simple processes of cleanliness. Cleanliness of the sex organs may be used as an excuse to explain to the child the need to be very gentle with them as well as carefully protective.

"Because, you see, they are very delicate, and they are so important that they are the things that make you really a man (or a woman) and later on a father (or a mother)." Without sermonising, the parent can use a bit of frivolity on the part of the child, utterly innocent and without guile, for a brief talk on the sacredness of his organs and the fact that they are the bearers of the germ of human life

LESSONS FROM THE "HAIL MARY"

Early in their lives all Catholic children learn the *Hail Mary*.

We tell the story of the sweet, pure Mary, who loved God with all her heart and soul (*Luke 1, 26-38*).

"She was becoming old enough now to be a mother. That

meant that she was a grown-up young lady and not a little girl any more.

"So one day a beautiful angel came from heaven to see her. Mary was praying. She was telling God how much she loved Him. She hoped that some day He would come to earth and she could see Him.

"Well the angel cried out, 'Hail, Mary.' That was his way of greeting her. It showed he thought she was important. Only important people were addressed with the word 'hail'.

"Then he told her the important news: She was going to have a baby. She was going to be a lovely mother. But her baby was going to be the Son of God. The Holy Spirit was going to be her spouse, which is just another word for husband.

"Now in Mary's body was, as is in the body of all women, a little germ. It was alive. But it wasn't a baby yet. It could be made into a baby though. Usually a man, the father of the baby, makes this germ into a baby. The father has a life germ too, and he gives it to the mother. The two germs make a little baby. That makes the man a father.

"But it wasn't a man who was Mary's Baby's father. It was God. The germ was in Mary's womb, which is the centre of a woman's body, not too far from her heart.

"So Mary said she was willing to be the mother of God's Son. She was very happy. Then the Holy Spirit of God worked a miracle. He formed the little germ into a little Baby, and the Baby rested in Mary's womb. It stayed there for nine months. You can remember that easily: The angel came to see Mary on March 25. That was the feast of the Annunciation. And Jesus was born on December 25: that was Christmas. All that time Mary took care of Him. She fed him with her own blood as He rested near her heart.

"Then Christmas came, and He came into the world out of Mary's body. Then we saw the beautiful Baby that Mary had given us.

"So we say, 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,' because the little Baby Jesus came from the womb of Mary, our Blessed Mother.

"And except for the fact that they have fathers who are men, all children came into the world in that same way."

If anyone hesitates about the telling of this story because of the possible shock to the young child, I should say he does not understand children and children's instinctively happy and wholesome reaction to whatever is true and good.

What could possibly be nobler than the way that the Son of God chose to enter the world?

USING THE "OUR FATHER"

While we are on the subject. . . The *Our Father* can be used to explain the more difficult problem of fatherhood. For that problem is one that often stumps otherwise frank and honest parents.

It might be handled like this:

"'Our Father, who art in heaven.'

"Isn't it beautiful to remember that you have two fathers? One of them is in heaven, and one of them lives here with us in this house."

(I find myself always putting these explanations into the mouth of a mother. With simple changes they can be handled quite as well by a father.)

"Both of these are our fathers, because they give us life.

"So let's look at Our Father in heaven.

"Once on a time we did not exist. God wanted us to be

His children. He wanted you to be His little son. So He said, 'I think I'll make little James, and then he will be my son.'

"So He made your daddy and me fall in love.

"He said to us, 'Will you help me to make a little boy named James?'

"We said we would be glad to. For you see, your father and I loved you even before we saw you. And so did Our Father in heaven.

"One happy day daddy and I were married. Now God gave us both the power to make a new life. Our Father in heaven has that power. He gave it to us. So daddy and God and I made you. We did it in this way:

"Daddy had a little germ of life in his body.

"I had a little germ of life in my body.

"We united those two germs in my body.

"And God helped us. So when the little germs united, God blew a soul into them, and there you were.

"You see, daddy and God and I made you because we loved you.

"And God is your Father; and daddy is your father; and I am your mother.

"And you are our little son, and we all love you very much."

LOVE IS PRODUCTIVE

As the children grow older, they can be beautifully initiated into the knowledge of the delightful fact that all love is essentially productive. If a man loves music, he produces a tune, even if only a tune that he whistles in the bathroom. If a man loves literature, he is likely to write a book or a poem. If a

woman loves housekeeping, she will create a delicious meal, a sunny room, even the wonderfully happy house over which she presides.

God loved us human beings, so He produced us. Furthermore He gave to human love that same power of production.

So a man and a woman fall in love. They love each other so much that they want to be together, and very close together. They want to share their lives. They are eager to live in the same house, share the same room. Thereupon their love, like all other love, becomes productive of something very beautiful.

Each of the parents carries in his or her body a germ of human life. Because they love each other, they embrace and hold each other dearly and protectively close. The man gives to the woman the lovely germ of life that is in his body. This unites with the germ in the body of the woman. Through this union they themselves are united in the closest possible physical way. As a consequence of this union of these two germs, the "fruit of their love" became the precious baby so dear both to the father and the mother.

So a little child, as he grows up and comes to understand things better, can be happy in the knowledge that he is the fruit of his parents' love. They brought him into the world because they loved each other and because even before they saw him they loved him, their little child.

ANIMAL PETS

For very little children and often for growing ones too pets may sometimes serve to help solve life's mysteries.

There is however the danger of allowing children to see only the animal side of this relationship. It would be the gravest mistake if they were not from the start made clearly

aware of the chasm-wide difference between love in human beings and animal passion in animals, between the animal born in undignified fashion and the child born as the immortal son of God.

With these modifications children may well be encouraged to have their pets. The birth of kittens can be explained simply and naturally. The youngsters can become aware of the relationship between a dog and the puppies he sired. Lambs have a delicacy of connotation which makes them good illustrative material. The difference between a fertile and an infertile egg can be explained. The spring season will bring to their attention the courtship, homemaking, and egg-laying of the birds around them. The tropical, viviferous fish may prepare them for later knowledge of life's origins.

"BIRDS AND BEES"

It has become fashionable in recent years to laugh with hearty cynicism (if heartiness and cynicism are not contradictory terms) at parental talks that start with references to "the birds and the bees".

God's ways are all essentially wonderful. Perhaps a child who understands the attraction of the bees for the flowers and the bees' consequent part in pollination may find the place of the father in human life rather beautiful and understand more fully the attraction that men feel for a beautiful woman.

The courtship of the birds is not an unpoetic or impractical symbol of the wooing of a woman by a man in the spring-time of their lives. The nest-building and cave-seeking instincts of birds and animals might be a sobering lesson to many a thoughtless modern who has no home and is honoured by no offspring because of deliberately unproductive love.

Indeed it is a decided question whether any real love can be unproductive. Are the modern childless marriages based on love at all? If so, they are the inhuman and antidivine instances of the only love which is not blessed with sweet and gracious and vital consequences.

THE APPROACH TO ADOLESCENCE

The handling of sex instructions for small children is relatively simple. The real problems arise when the children approach adolescence. The girl looks worried and afraid. The boy often becomes sullen, morose, abstracted, rude. The mother notices possibly with alarm a slight stain on the bed linen. She hates to admit to herself that her children are growing up. Anxiously she faces the task of making them aware of the answers to the questions that may be disturbing if not actually torturing their minds.

I understand that even the dignified *Judge Hardy*, though I have not seen the picture, made a fool of himself when he tried to explain "the facts of life" to the adolescent Andy.

I cannot repeat too often though that, if the proper relationship of confidence and open candour has been established between parents and children, the diffidence of the parents and the embarrassment of the adolescent boy and girl can be cut to a minimum.

THE GIRL'S PERIODS

Let's take the easiest of the cases: The mother must of course delicately and carefully prepare the little girl for the coming of her periods. Because mothers do not do this, or because they treat the whole matter in brisk, curt, or even regretful and annoyed fashion, girls grow into young womanhood de-

testing the experience and giving it any of the dozen unpleasant names by which they stigmatise their "curse". Or the girl has her first painful experience and goes into a complete panic. She is thrown into confusion and terror, which may leave a brutal wound on her psychological life for many a long year.

The first approach is the purely hygienic one, the simple matter of how the period is to be cared for.

The girl will be puzzled however by her experience. This reaction affords an excellent opportunity for the mother to explain to the child exactly what the period means and that it is really a beautiful and entirely dignified and reassuring experience.

"My daughter, you are almost a young woman now. When you become a grown woman, a very important thing is going to happen to you. You remember how in the *Hail Mary* we say, 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb'? Well every woman has in her body a little sack that is called a womb. Connected with it are two little chambers called ovaries. These are so called from the Latin word *ovum*, which means a tiny egg.

"As soon as a little girl has grown up, there is developed every twenty-eight days in her egg-bearers or ovaries a precious little germ of life. When you have grown older and are married, that little germ can become a dear little baby. But that won't happen for a good many years, not until you are married and have a home of your own.

"The little germ passes down into the girl's womb. The womb is covered with important little blood vessels and nerves. Those blood vessels will later on feed blood to the little baby that you as a mother may carry in your womb. But when there is no little baby in your womb but only the life germ,

those blood vessels open and the blood washes the little germ out of your body. That causes you pain and some inconvenience.

"But you mustn't mind that. It only proves that you are growing up. It shows that you will be able to be a mother when you really grow up.

"So some day if you are to become a mother, that little germ won't be washed out of your body. Instead the little germ will become a little baby, and the blood will feed and nourish him, as the blood of the Blessed Mother took care of the Infant Jesus, who was the fruit of her womb."

It seems to me that if young children were given even prior to their first period this simple but clear idea of the meaning of these periods, they would regard it—instead of feeling a revulsion toward it and hating it and branding it with offensive and often disgusting names—as a sacred and significant thing. Its first occurrence would make in their minds a real forward step in adult development and growth. They would be happy to know themselves to be developing women. They would hold high the responsibility for their future motherhood.

In somewhat the same fashion it may be wise to explain to young girls the development of their bosom. If this explanation can be mentally tied in with the care and feeding of children, the girls will at once adopt an attitude of respect and modesty.

"God wants mothers and their children to come very close together. When you were a very little baby," explains the mother, "I gave you food from my body. You rested against my breast, and I fed you. Isn't that lovely?"

"Well you are growing up now. Someday if you marry and are a mother, you will give your little child that same nourishing milk. He will grow strong because of the food

you give him for his body, just as you grew strong and charming because I nursed you when you were a little baby.

"So you see your breasts are very sacred and important. You have to keep them very pure and sweet. You can't let them be touched by evil thoughts or rough people. That is why you must always be modest and pure. You want to be sure that you'll give your little baby only dear, sweet, pure, wholesome food. That is what I wanted to do for you."

BOY'S ADOLESCENCE

The boy's adolescence presents even more problems. With the dawn of puberty the most violent physical and psychological changes come over him. He is awakened in the night by physical experiences that he does not understand. His former contempt for girls is succeeded by a vehement curiosity about them and an interest in them which he regards as utterly abnormal, stupidly disconcerting, and probably shameful. Temptations to queer thoughts enter his mind. He looks with suspicion on older people. "Have they had these experiences? Have they led, are they actually leading, sinful lives?"

The results of these changes may lead to a temporary change in the boy's disposition. Where once he was cheerful, he may become morose and silent. Perhaps he gets a furtive way of having secrets, of clipping slightly immodest pictures of women and hiding them, of trying to find out from his fellows what it is all about or of bragging to them that he knows "all about it"—whereas he is merely in a cloudy haze.

Boys who struggle along in the dark about all this are often a real problem to teachers and parents. They try to exorcise their temptations by loudness of voice, boisterous "roughhouse",

a general tendency toward breaking up the furniture. Their interest in girls leads them to a disguise which makes them insult their sisters, pull the hair of any girl they can reach, and kick out defensively at women in general. They hear other little boys say that "all little girls are bad". They wonder curiously if that is true, and then they deny this with all the vehemence of their indignant souls.

All this can be forestalled or at least palliated if the parents give the youngster a decent preparatory outlook on life.

"Now you're growing up, son. As you become older, a great many important changes are going to take place in you. Some of these are merely interesting and not in any sense disturbing. Your voice will change and become like your father's. That will be a clear sign that you are no longer a little boy but are becoming a young man. You will notice hair beginning to grow on your body. Only grown up men have that. So you can say to yourself, 'I guess I'm really growing up.'

"Don't be surprised if in your sleep or at other times your male organ seems to swell. That is merely because blood has flowed to it.

"Now in all probability you will find queer thoughts running through your mind. You may suffer physical temptations that you won't understand. Let me explain that very simply.

"When you were a little boy and still a child, God wanted you to be happy and have fun and learn a lot of things that are necessary for you to be a success. He wanted you just to eat and sleep and play and go to school and have fun so that you could grow strong and be a fine big fellow.

"But when a boy becomes a little older, about the age you are now, he is really on the way to becoming a man.

"God wants most men to be fathers. So into their bodies He puts a most important germ of life. A man carries that germ around in his male organ. That germ is almost like half a little baby. Because if it is united with the germ a woman carries, it can become a little baby. When that germ is forming in your body, you know that you are growing up.

"So if you start to experience these temptations, if you see in your mind strange and unpleasant pictures, don't let them bother you or make you imagine you are queer. Put them out of your mind and say, "Well I guess I'm really growing up now. And those thoughts just prove that God is giving me that precious germ. All that those thoughts prove is that someday, I guess, I can be a father."

"Play harder than ever. Eat well. Try to grow into a strong, wholesome, vigorous man. Keep your mind as free as you can from those thoughts; don't waste time on them. When those thoughts come in your mind, get up and turn on the radio or go out and play ball. But don't let them worry you, and don't let them stay in your mind.

"Then God will make you a fine, strong man fit to be the father of a grand little boy like my son."

NIGHT RELEASES

Even before the first stain on the bed linen announces the boy's involuntary night release, the parents should adjust themselves to a correct viewpoint on the whole matter.

They must know that this is God's and nature's way of caring for the superfluous seed or germs (or the nutriment of those elements) which have developed in the boy's body. Since a man develops a tremendous quantity of spermatozoa, some of them flow back into his body to make him a strong,

well-matured, adult male. Some of them flow out during sleep, since nature is extravagant with her life elements.

The mere presence of this factor does indicate the development of adolescence, for which a boy must be prepared. Usually he wakes during the course of this nightly release and experiences the pleasure that accompanies it. That may make him curious. Or if it results in his trying to produce the effect himself, this may be the beginnings of self-abuse.

If the boy has been properly prepared for this experience, he may avoid all mental upsets or the forming of any evil habits.

To him then the parents explain a little more fully the fact that he is the bearer of this male germ of life.

"That germ, my son, is very precious and very important. So you must never waste it or use it in any careless, evil way.

"You see, God gives you a great many of those germs. Most of them go back into your own body. They help make you a man. They are what cause your voice to change, your muscles to grow, your body to become more and more manly. So you mustn't waste these germs or they might not get a chance to make you a strong, vigorously developed man.

"If during sleep however nature releases some of these germs, that may mean that there are so many in your body that you will be more comfortable if they are thrown off. Don't let that worry you at all. The experience won't hurt you. It won't, if you yourself don't abuse it, be in the slightest way wrong.

"You may feel pleasure connected with this if you should happen to be awake at the time. Don't think about that too much. God knows that it is hard to be a father and to work for one's children and to give them all the things they need.

So He says to men, 'If you will, when you get married, be a good father, I will bless you with happiness and pleasure while you are giving that seed of life to your wife, who will be a mother.' God rewards us for everything we do. He certainly rewards a father who gives Him fine, strong little sons and daughters.

"But you mustn't waste that little germ yourself. That is very wicked. You must say, 'I shall be very pure and modest and take care of myself until I am ready to be a father.' Then God will make you a very happy man, strong, and pure, and fit to be the father of His children."

Parents should understand that the loss of seed, either through night release or through the practice of self-abuse, is not, except in the rarest of cases, attended by physical evils. At times parents give their children an entirely wrong idea about this. To frighten them out of the practice of self-abuse, parents pretend that this practice destroys manhood, brings about invalidism, causes terrible sickness. Children will as a consequence grow to manhood thinking that they are physically unfit for life. Unscrupulous doctors who get their hands on boys will persuade them that night releases and self-abuse have caused them to become sick and unable to assume the duties of fatherhood.

Physical consequences of all this are very rare. They need not be taken into consideration by parents, much less be worried about.

The psychological effects however can be heavy and harsh. If a child worries about night releases, he is likely to brood, think himself defective, and hate the whole process of life. He may be twisted into a sullen introvert, become really maladjusted for any normal life.

If the child begins to practise self-abuse, he may grow utterly despairful. Not understanding the significance of

what he does, he may come to think of himself as growing steadily weaker and weaker, as losing his right to decent adult life, as being a pervert, abnormal.

Now pessimism, which may result from the sin, is the worst possible state of mind for a boy who is trying to handle or cure this evil. If he thinks he's licked, he actually may be licked. If he thinks himself defective, that is disastrous.

While the matter should never be dismissed lightly, the real remedies must be kept clearly before the boy. He should be kept busy and happy. His free time should be filled with games and music and pleasant companionship. He should be so tired out at night that he will go promptly to bed. He may be allowed the habit of reading in the bathroom, even if this somewhat inconveniences the rest of the family, who may be delayed by his leisurely attitude.

The prevention and cure of self-abuse in a boy is simply an optimistic attitude toward the whole problem; high ideals of manliness; an exhaustion of the animal nature by lots of exercise, competitive sports, and pleasant recreation; the filling of his mind with music and hobbies and interests of every kind. Prayer and the sacraments complete the cure.

DIFFERENCES IN BOYS AND GIRLS

Between the ages of twelve and sixteen most normal boys go through a period of violent temptation. Tactfully—without much actual discussion of the problem beyond the initial handling and the advice to choose a confessor who will give them time and gentle, patient, wise advice—the parents can guide them through their trials.

Girls are tempted too. But always it must be understood by parents that especially during these years their boy and

girl are very different little humans. The girl sails through her adolescence sometimes with resentment, seldom with violent temptations. The boy is likely to have a period of stormy siege that beats against his body and makes of his soul a fiery tempest. Never is the difference between the male and the female clearer than during these years of physical change. That is why girls of that age will often be a joy and boys a trial, a nuisance, and a mystery.

If parents do understand this difference, their whole attitude toward their son will be marked with gentle understanding, high ideals, and a deal of patience and personal interest. They will encourage his love of sports, his desire to cultivate hobbies and to blow off steam. They will not even mind his loud voice and clumping feet. Wisely they will even be glad of these things, which exhaust the animal nature that might in a brooding, silent, too well-mannered boy result in fierce temptations and perhaps sins.

TEMPTATIONS NATURAL AND INDUCED

But both boys and girls should be made aware of the double aspect of temptation. For their own peace of mind they must be reassured that temptations of this sort, mental and physical, come to all men and women, even to saints. At the same time they must be clearly taught, and by example shown, that to arouse temptation deliberately is a very different matter.

Hence they must be shown that books that are evil will simply make life more difficult for them, will arouse and put on the savage warpath temptations which are already severe enough. The same is true of pictures that normally would excite any boy or girl.

Boys and girls must, as they grow older, be shown the clear

difference yet close connection between temptation and sin. There are certain actions which nature designed to excite a man and a woman. Passionate kisses, close and fervid embraces, indecent exposure, immodesty in all its forms—these are in the plan of nature intended to arouse passion and throw the participants into a state of violent excitement.

SUBNORMALS OR LIARS

When young fellows or girls come to me and say, "Oh that sort of thing doesn't bother me, you know; I can kiss and pet and go to immodest shows and look at what you call dangerous pictures without being affected at all," I have one standard answer:

"Then I'm sorry to say that either you are a liar or you are subnormal. I sincerely hope for the sake of your future that you are a liar. For if these things do not excite you, if they leave you cold, if they do not do to you what God and nature meant them to do—excite you, stimulate you to desire, awake your passions—there must be something very wrong with your glandular development. Too I pity the person you marry. You will always be a cold, unresponsive fish and very dull, dreary and unresponsive to the normal love that should cement or rather fuse a man and a woman in marriage.

"If what you say of yourself is really true, you are a person for whom we can feel truly sad. Love will never really touch you. You will know only selfishness. You are a foredoomed bachelor (or spinster); and I hope you will stay that way, without any approach to the normal marriage of normal people."

SEEKING TEMPTATION

Every young person—and that means youngsters too—approaching adolescence must be made aware that relatively

few people really do go questing for sin. They do not say, "Today I shall be evil. Today I shall do something very wicked and obscene."

What happens is something very different. People go playing around the fringes of temptations. They run pleasant, quite fascinating, almost hypnotically delightful risks. They say, "This is an amusing book; and while reading it, I'll not give consent to sin." Or "This is a delightful person—dangerous of course and likely to lead me into sin, but let's not worry about it. I'll handle all that part of it with perfect ease." Or "This is a show full of temptations for other people, but not for the exceptional person like me." Or "I'll look at this evil picture, always with the understanding that I shan't commit sin." Or "I'll do this and that and the other that should excite and arouse me. I'll enjoy the excitement and warm myself at the pale flames of passion, which I do not mean to fan to dangerous heat."

OCCASIONS OF SIN

Hence it is that parents must watch less for sin itself in their children than for the occasions of sin, the people and companions who might teach them sin or make sin easy for them, those objects of whatever nature which are calculated to stimulate the human passions to successful rebellion.

All this in the concrete is clear enough to understand.

Children must have companionship. Parents can do far more to select these companions than they themselves realise:

A. If their friends are the right sort, the children of those friends will be the right companions for their children.

B. If they pick the right kind of schools, they can cut

down amazingly the whole problem of temptation. For a Catholic child there is only one kind of school, whatever the apparent advantages of other schools—a school with a Catholic faculty, atmosphere, and student body, from kindergarten to postgraduate work.

C. If parents afford their children the right kind of recreation in their own home and under their friendly and sympathetic eyes, the dangers of wrong entertainment and sinful pleasure are considerably lessened.

D. Parents can early teach their children by sheer force of their own custom the safety and value of the foursome. A boy and a girl together may each be a danger to the other; that danger is cut to a good half if there are two boys and two girls together.

E. Parents can accustom their children to thinking of them, not as watchdogs or chaperons, but as friendly and animated participants in their good times. Parents as "cops" are unwelcome. Parents as gay and happy fellow "partiers" are quite a different matter.

F. It is a mistake for parents to go off and leave a crowd of young people in the house alone. Some adult should be there, just as a restraining reminder if for no other reason. When parents go off to the movies or to their own parties and leave the house and the children alone, some bright soul will think of kissing games, move on to post office—with a dark room for the post office—and then turn out the lights, to the bewilderment of the innocent and the delight of the initiated.

IDEALS FIRST

Yet in all this we are faced with sheer futility unless the parents have built up in their children a strong love of and

reverence for purity. Love must be shown to them as beautiful and sacred, and the love of the mother and the father is the strongest proof of this. Affection must be kept for the chosen few, not lavished on every chance partner of an evening or on anyone who happens to have a sudden impulse that says, "Isn't she attractive?" or "Doesn't he look strong and handsome?"

The creative act must early be recognised as the only source of human life, the instrument for the entrance of little children into the world. As such it is a noble and beautiful power. As anything else it is cheap, funny, humiliatingly animal, tantalisingly base. Purity must be seen, not as a weakness, but as the safeguard of that power for the strong future fathers and the pure future mothers of the race.

Around purity must be thrown all the charm of a happy home, of tender congenial parents, of love manifested toward the children by the mother and the father and among the children in the decent courtesy of the brothers and the sweetness of the sisters.

TOWARD A MORE CIVILISED LIVING

Most adult human beings divide their lives into two sections: their professional sectors and their nonprofessional sectors.

During their professional lives they follow some line of activity in which they earn their bread by working in some way for those who come to them from outside their families. So a man may be a physician, a lawyer, a professional athlete, a merchant, a mechanic, a man of literature, a sailor, a soldier. A woman may be a teacher, a nurse, a social worker, a businesswoman, a doctor, an opera singer, an entertainer, a saleswoman, a factory operator.

In their nonprofessional lives however they are simply human beings, who live in homes, eat more or less pleasurable meals, take their ease or recreation, meet their families, read, relax, sleep, enjoy their hobbies, and try to forget the work by which they earn their living.

Anyone reading the above carefully will immediately demand: "Where do wives and mothers, who are also the family housekeepers, fit into those divisions?" They might with equal justice ask: "What about priests and nuns, who are engaged in their professions twenty-four hours a day?"

PROFESSIONALS TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY

Indeed if the question is asked, it becomes a welcome cue for the point I wish to make: Parents are of that peculiar group

of people—like housekeepers—who lead their professional life twenty-four hours a day in a three-hundred-and-sixty-five-(and sometimes six-) day year.

Even the teacher makes a clean division in his life; there are the hours when he stands before a class—guide, director, pedagogue—reaching out for the reluctant hands of youth. But parents are parents all the time.

Parents can never really slip away for a time and be completely at ease. They stand before their children during all the waking hours. For children never forget that these adults are fathers and mothers, and they never cease to scrutinise them as teachers, examples, guides, and the models of their developing lives.

That makes things very hard for mothers and fathers. It would be such a relief to feel that “today the children won’t be watching me”. It would be delightful to give an order and then go off, to return only when the injunction has been fulfilled by the obedient flock.

But such escape on the part of a father and a mother is not possible. Even when they slip away for a holiday, if they can manage it, either they have the children with them, or the imaginations of the children follow them with persistent interest.

CONSTANTLY OBSERVED

However much they may try to dodge it, parents know they are the observed of all the observers in their family circle. And great heavens, how children can observe! One little girl I know is afflicted with parents who give her prolonged doses of absent treatment. They go away for months at a time, leaving her in the care of hirelings. The child spends hours of her waking days following them about with her mind

and imagining the worst about them. Their selfishness toward her is justification for everything that she is convinced they do when they are out of her sight.

The result of this being constantly observed however is not without its element of satisfaction. The parent is the one type of teacher who need say relatively little to the pupils. In fact speech-making on the part of parents is always a little wasteful and more often than not a bit absurd and pompous. They teach without the formality of teaching. In a word they are most effective when their actions speak louder than could any words and their conduct makes moral maxims and windy exhortations absolutely unimportant.

BY DEED, NOT WORD

The most effective parents are those whose teaching is, not formal, but factual. They don't tell children what to do; they show them by doing it themselves. They go slow on precept and long on practice. They never say, "Do this," or "Be like me." They themselves do this and are such charming and attractive and splendid people that their children would feel they were missing incalculably much if they did not make every effort actually to become like them.

THE TEACHING OF ONE FATHER

I was well on in years before I realised my father's influence on my life.

When after my mother's death, which followed my father's by several years, I sat myself down to write her biography, I found I could remember her vividly. But my father was almost misty in my memory. He was a delightful person full of laughter and good humour, an utterly devoted husband,

and the kind of father whose pockets were always bulging with gifts for us kids and who had all the time in the world (despite a working day that took him away at seven o'clock in the morning and returned him never before eight at night) for his two boys.

Yet it was my mother's story that I wanted to tell and tried to tell. All the while I did not notice the way that my father kept creeping into the story, smiling, shy, never intentionally intruding, but constantly there.

When the book was finished and being read, I became amazed at the number of people who said, "Ah but I liked your father. He was a charming man. Why don't you write his story?"

At first I was completely puzzled. How had dad managed to work his way into the story at all? Then when I sat down again to see whether I could write his biography, I realised that I knew too little about him to fill even a booklet. Finally I looked back over what I had written—quite without knowing I had written it—about him. Only then at long length did it dawn upon me that the man whom I had seen only briefly in the evenings, who had spent his Sundays with us when we kids deigned to stay home, whom I had never regarded as a marked influence in my life, who in everything where the children were concerned yielded to his wife, my mother—that man had been a most powerful force in the shaping of my character.

I was far more like him (I sincerely hoped) than I had dreamed. Though I fell far short of his charm and goodness and gentleness and high regard for women and devotion to a job, still all those qualities had without any effort on his part gravated themselves on my own soul.

He was the perfect instance of the silent force, example speaking without need of words.

NO SPOKEN ADVICE, YET...

For in all his life I can remember his giving me advice or even attempting to give me advice just twice. Once in the most hesitant manner and broken sentences one could imagine, he talked of my mother. Coherently put, his little talk ran like this:

"She is very sensitive," he said. "We, her boys, you and James and I, are all she has. Nobody else really means much to her, you know, and that is why I think we have to remember how much of her happiness depends upon us. Your mother has given her life for us. No other woman in the world has been so good and so unselfish. Remember that. And remember that you can make her blissfully happy or utterly wretched.

"Oh I take it for granted that you'll never do anything criminal. You won't disgrace her. That's not what I'm thinking of. It's the little affectionate word that matters to a woman like your mother. It's the way you look at her and the things you say to her. It's kissing her affectionately just because you seem to want to. It's praising her a little. It's remembering to write to her and to thank her and to be grateful for the dinner on which she spends so much time and thought.

"That's all, son. You understand. But do try to make her happy, won't you? You have been given a better training than either James or I. You know more about what should be done and what shouldn't be done. So you can do more for her, you know, a lot more. You will, won't you?"

GALLANT ATTITUDE

That was all. But in the fifteen minutes it took him to say it, he had gone through agonies of embarrassment and humility.

With the years I have contrasted my own attitude toward my mother with his attitude toward her, and I hang my head. Even that speech of his, broken and faltering and clumsy, wasn't really needed. Out of his life and conduct I could have written that summary as adequately as I now write it out of his half-formed sentences and hesitating, unfinished phrases. He did during all his life exactly what at that late date he was asking of me. I knew it. How could his little talk do otherwise than affect most profoundly my whole attitude not only toward my mother but toward all womankind, of which she was the example nearest and dearest to us?

A TALK THAT NEVER "CAME OFF"

The only other occasion on which he tried to talk to me I have often used in perhaps callous fashion as an instance of how not to approach an adolescent. A few things my mother had noticed in me—less respectful attitudes toward girls, the type of pictures I hung on the walls of my room, my sudden interest in a young woman whom she regarded, and rightly, as too swift and promiscuous for any boy's good—must have made her reproach my father for his neglect of his duty.

"You ought to talk to your son," she probably said. Of course he always tried to do whatever she asked.

She managed this morning to hurry home after Mass and leave us to walk home together. He had at that time been a Catholic for only a short time; I was just entering college, a self-conscious adolescent, very sure of myself, and very resent-

ful of anything I thought gauche, badly done, clumsy, or intrusive.

In my salad-green conceit I considered that this interview rated all those painful adjectives.

During the long, harrowing walk home he tried to talk. I couldn't figure out what he had on his mind. He was usually bright, witty, and carefree, talking easily to us youngsters, and finding fun in everything. Now he was self-conscious, nervous, twitchy, walking faster than usual, and shifting from fast chatter to tense silences. I guessed there was something up and that I was involved in it somehow, but I couldn't get at what it might be.

It was not until we had reached the front porch that he assembled enough courage and words to make his speech. Then and there in one swift sentence he poured out his sense of futility. "Mother told me that I'd better talk to you about . . . well about anything you might like to know; so if ever there is anything that you'd like to ask me about, well just ask me about it."

He was purple with embarrassment by the time he had finished. I know that my face was burning with shame, indignation, and pity for the fumbling attempt he had made. Yet even before the final period had been slapped on the sentence, he was gone, the door yawning behind him for my reluctant entrance.

That was the first and only time that he ever even so much as tried to talk to me about the facts of life or any other moral or social issue.

WORDS NOT NECESSARY

As I say, I have often thought of this as a horrible example of how not to approach young people. Sometimes I have

even quoted it as such. Actually and in all truth as a presentation of principles and as a method of winning the confidence of a youngster or of making him want either to talk or to listen, it was hopeless.

Now though I know something more important. I know that all his life my father had been preaching to me in eloquent example. He never talked about honesty; he didn't need to, for he himself was a transparently honest man. He never gave me panegyrics on the dignity of labour; he gave me the example of his infinitely laborious life. He did not sit down to go over with me the laws and customs that make for good manners or to explain various definitions of a gentleman; he was a gentleman, and I never saw him fail in any of the things that make for essentially good manners. He did not have to talk to me about purity; his pure love of my mother, his devotion to her, complete and unashamed, his own scrupulously guiltless conduct were far more impressive than all the eloquence in the world could have been.

Today I know that, silent as he was on all the issues that come under the heading of child training, convinced as he was that these things belong to the office of a mother, he was still a most powerful teacher and a most persuasive argument for right living and decent conduct.

He was a father who was a father all the time. He had no need to put into words what was already so clear and compelling and charmingly suasive in his own conduct.

Parents must keep reminding themselves that their own personal characteristics are their children's chief textbook. Their own habits are the laboratory practice which the children constantly observe. The way they themselves speak and act make up the essential curriculum that far outweighs any lectures they might

deliver or any heart-to-heart talks which, though they are precious and valuable, in the end merely reinforce the convincing argument of parental example.

THE CIVILISED VIRTUES

There are certain virtues which tend toward the making of an orderly civilisation and a pleasant national culture. They are virtues distinctly humane and hence necessary for proper human conduct. We cannot touch them all. So let's consider just some of the high virtues that are civilised and charming.

HUMAN AND HUMANE

Unfortunately children do not need to live long in this world of ours before they learn the immense amount of unhappiness which is brought about by the underhand conduct of their elders. They soon come in contact with dishonesty in any of its thousand forms. They see their parents take unfair advantage of their peers or their inferiors and hear them brazenly brag of this as of a major accomplishment.

Indeed we can wonder if the word honourable as an adjective is not an old-fashioned and somewhat ridiculous term. "Has the young man honourable intentions?" the father in the melodrama asks. And the audience is expected to think that rather funny. "He is an honourable man" is a phrase we rarely hear these days. Smart men, yes; successful or clever men, certainly; men who get ahead in life and make their way by kicking weaker men out of their path, assuredly; honourable men... what precisely are they?

HONOUR AND HONESTY

Now it does seem important that parents should give a little thought to the ideas that underlie honour and honesty. Once in a course of lectures I based much of my discussion of these words on the old English word *decent*. That word is simply the Latin participle *decens*. It means, "the thing to do," "the proper thing," "the thing that fits in with human nature".

Really behind that word decent could easily be packed the entire series of the theses in Scholastic philosophy that maintain that morality consists in our correct relationship to our human nature. Murder is indecent; charity is decent. Impurity is indecent; purity is noble and decent. Good manners are the decent mode of conduct; bad manners are inhuman and brutal.

So quite independently of whether or not one is going to be caught, one should be honest and honourable. That is the decent, the fitting, the human thing to do.

By way of clarification we could take the relationship of a man toward animals. Scholastic philosophers do not consider that animals, properly speaking, have any rights. For the moment we may skip their cogent reasons. But the fact that animals have no rights does not give a man the right to abuse animals. For a man to beat a horse unmercifully or to mistreat a dog may not in any way infringe on any rights, which the animal does not possess; but such conduct is inhuman, inhumane, indecent. It is simply not befitting a human being. It is an insult to his human character.

Now much of the conduct with which youngsters come in contact they instantly, or at least with slowly growing reason, recognise as inhuman and inhumane. They feel that conduct like that does not befit human dignity. They are shocked

at the lies they hear their parents blithely spout. They are startled at dishonest conduct hidden under trickery. They are embarrassed to find their father without honour, their mother careless in matters of honesty. With their logical young minds they are quick to see the indecency of such conduct. They are startled and abashed.

Yet it takes only a short time of exposure to inhuman conduct to make the person exposed incline the same way. So if a child finds his parents dishonourable in large things, he easily becomes dishonourable in small things. He matches the family lies with his petty falsehoods. He sees in his parents major dishonesties that he can imitate with small theft.

How fierce the need today for honour and honesty! We have lived to see dishonesty become the international law—or shall we call it lawlessness? We are so startled by the vastness of world-wide dishonour that we forget that it took its rise in the homes and hearts of individually dishonest, dishonourable men and women.

Let parents do some quiet, soul-searching thinking about their own sense of honour. Then let them see what they are passing on to their children.

Let's take a look at the noble virtue of honesty.

"Willie," cries the teacher, "you will stay after school and write, five hundred times, *Honesty is the best policy.*"

"So what?" thinks Willie, with deep irony.

He stays and writes the old puritan platitude four hundred and twenty times, but with a little readjusting of the numbers he makes teacher think he has written it the full five hundred times.

"Best policy, my eye!" laughs little Willie, and he hurries

out to the waiting gang. For little Willie's father had long since taught him, though altogether unconsciously, that honesty is a sucker's game and that only fools pay honest income taxes or hesitate about a shady deal that involves no risks; and he brags about how he puts it over on the customer, the boss, a competitor.

NOT FRANKNESS

Youngsters today have come, as I have noted elsewhere, to confuse honesty with frankness.

"Whatever our other vices may be," the modern young boy or young girl brags, "you have to admit we're honest."

Which is precisely what I don't think they are.

They are perfectly willing to cheat in exams, to borrow the work of fellow student, to beat the railway company or the bus operator out of a fare if they can get away with it. They tell their parents shameless yarns about where they've been or what they've been doing.

Yet all the time they brag that they are honest.

What they really mean is that about their faults, which they think rather smart, they will be quite candid—to people who haven't the power or authority to do anything about them.

Now honesty cannot be taught in formal schools any more than it can be taught in reform schools. Honesty is the ingrained practice of a lifetime. It is passed on from father to son, from mother to daughter, or it never does reach the children.

The children should be made to feel that around them is the most scrupulous honesty. For honesty, like charity, starts at home, though emphatically it extends its influence beyond the home.

INDIVIDUAL FAMILY RIGHTS

A scrupulous regard for the rights of the members of the family should simply be routine practice. Homes are not communes. They are benevolent monarchies with a strong slant toward democratic ideals. Hence a sense of the right to private property should prevail. There are of course a great many things shared in common in a home. These belong to all and are used by all—the furniture, the books in the house library, the normal conveniences and necessities that must be shared in equality. Yet each member of the family has his own possessions—his clothes, luxury items, toilet articles, toys, books, sport goods, his room and its accessories.

Toward these things should be developed a real sense of ownership that should result in each one's respect for the rights of the other and no one's using another's possessions without permission being requested politely and granted explicitly.

In all this the father and the mother set the example. They have plenty of things in common. But each has his or her own belongings; and though ever so generous and willing to lend, each expects to be asked and expects to have to ask before there is any interchange. Mother does not take dad's golf balls without asking him or telling him—and she duplicates them later on. Dad does not take mother's Eau de Cologne to use as his after-shaving lotion until he first gets her leave.

Each has a great respect for the closets of the other, for the drawers in the bureau which contain personal possessions, for such minor but significant articles as brushes, handkerchiefs, jewelry.

Important as all this is to insure peace between the parents, it has the still further purpose of increasing in the children a respect for the rights of others, which underlies all true honesty.

If the owner of the property that has been taken or borrowed is not at home, then he should in all fairness be told immediately of the presumed use. This is only decent. It is common courtesy carried into the family circle.

What the parents themselves practise, they demand of their children. The children are not allowed to take one another's clothes or toys or personal belonging without their being granted permission. Elder sister may not borrow younger sister's gloves, which she has carefully put away; nor can elder brother borrow younger brother's necktie. If anyone wants to borrow a badminton racket, a pair of tennis balls or bicycle, he does not do so without asking and receiving the leave.

A little honest consideration like this at home will ultimately go far to make the children honest when they are away from home.

RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

When parents take their children out with them, they have a grand chance to inculcate honesty into them. They themselves protect the property of others or of the state with genuine consideration. A certain type of minor criminal common in all layers of society regards honesty as something that does not apply to any property other than that of the individual. So they will cheat a railway company or steal flowers from the public park or bring home bushes they have furtively lifted from the county's roadside improvement project. They will put their feet all over the chairs in a hotel, to the destruction of the upholstering. They will pilfer from a public restaurant a spoon or a teapot or an ash tray. Some will carry away from hotels towels and bedding and the cloth covers of dressers.

A hotel official told me that one of the hotel's biggest items of loss is brought about through the thefts committed by supposedly reputable guests. A hotel housekeeper in one of our nation's largest hotels said that the maids are instructed to swoop down on a room the minute it is vacated so that if any serious thefts have been committed the departing guest can be halted and his baggage relieved of its accretion before he gets too far away.

If children see this adult attitude toward property, their sense of honesty will soon atrophy and die. Honesty in such matters will prove a most powerful incentive to honesty on a wider scale.

PAYING BILLS

Children are keen about the stand parents take toward the payment of bills—keener than one might think. Taxes are something that can—with difficulty—be dodged. Time was when dodging the income tax was a great national sport, and fathers in the presence of their children bragged of the thousands they knocked off—as hunters might brag of the lionss they bagged or bowlers of the scores they toppled—to the scandal of their children.

Parents who want their children to be honest will pay not only the large firms, which know how to collect, but the small firms which can collect only with difficulty. A peculiar sense of furtiveness develops in a house when bills are contracted far beyond the family's ability to pay. Children sense their parents' dodging of bill collectors; and if it does not create in them a sort of dishonest shame, they may come to look on it as a game, which they continue to play all their lives.

Care has to be taken of such things as time payments.

Children are amazed and shocked if they see furniture brought into the house and then carted away, or if the parents send them to the door to stall off the instalment collector.

To live within one's income is a simple form of honesty that makes a lifelong impression upon the children. It is a great foundation for honesty.

BORROWING

My grandmother hated the casual habit of borrowing. She loved to tell of the old Irish lady who continuously borrowed her neighbour's churn. Happily coming into a little money, she managed to get a churn of her own. So no longer did she have to beg the loan of her neighbour's. But it happened that the neighbour herself broke her churn one fine day. And when she called on her old borrowing friend for the brief loan of the new churn, the erstwhile beggar held up her chin in disdain: "Indade not," she replied. "I'll have yez understhand that I nather borrow nor lind."

Borrowing is at times necessary. Strict honesty about borrowed articles, whether from the family, from friends, from the general public, is important for the honesty of the children. If the children are sent next door for a cup of sugar, those same children should later return the cup of sugar. If they borrow one of the neighbour's sleds or bicycles or lawn mowers, they must be watched until they return it—and in good condition.

Books borrowed from friends or from the public library become more than a trust and a charge. A friend of mine, knowing the way that books linger in the hands of borrowers, had a special bookplate made. In the centre was his name and address. And around it was his significant motto: "Never think it too late to return this book."

HONESTY IN CONDUCT

There is of course another type of honesty beyond mere honesty about money or property. There is honesty in conduct. Children have a quick perception of any trickery that exists in the family social relations. Yet on the supposition that children do not understand or have no sense of honest standards, parents will make their children fellow conspirators in arrant intramural dishonesty. The mother who uses the household money for unnecessary luxuries or for playing the races does not scruple to let the children see her trickery. The children are allowed to realise that the father is holding out on the mother or using money for his own selfish gratifications and vices.

Parents have a way of forming conspiracies that actually involve the children. Says mother: "Now we're going to the theatre and to lunch this afternoon, but don't tell your dad." Or dad: "You and I are going to slip off and see a ball game, but for heaven's sake don't let your mother know."

Nothing else delights the children more than this opportunity to play conspirators or smugglers in partnership with their elders. Nothing else could more quickly distort their sense of honour and honesty.

HONEST WORK IN SCHOOL

When the child enters school, the parents are wise if they insist upon his honest work in class. They are paying tuition, and it is a simple matter of honesty on the child's part to do a decent job. They are however foolish if they so ride the child that in his struggle to get marks beyond what he naturally could earn he is practically forced to cheat in examinations or borrow the work of others. Sheer fear of parental disapproval will sometimes make little cheats and sneaks and incor-

rigible borrowers of youngsters who would prefer to be honest but are afraid to face their parents' wrath.

LOVE OF WORK

Life is pretty terrible for the man or the woman who hates his work.

Yet all of us human animals have an inertia that can be overcome only by training on our part and on the part of those who bring us to maturity.

Happy the children whose parents have toward work a cheerful attitude.

This attitude rests of course on high ideals. God, the Christian knows, in that ideal which he contributes to his children, made the world only to turn it over to the management of His sons and daughters. Hence when a man works, he works with God Himself. He is by his work making the world a happier place to live in. He is assisting God to bring His magnificent plans to fulfilment. He actually—and possibly notably—benefits his fellow men. He makes the world a joyous, comfortable, attractive abode for his brothers and sisters.

MORNING OFFERING

This attitude can be presented to the children as they are taught their morning offering. By this prayer the whole family offers to God the work of the day. Work cannot be offered to God unless it is in itself dignified and noble. Even if some particular job seems trivial, menial, and without apparent significance, it gains importance and dignity and value by the very fact that it is offered to God and because of the morning offering, is done in collaboration with Him.

THE FATHER'S WORK

Eloquent beyond the need of words is the interest that boys feel in their father's work. Even a little child soon comes to realise that his father leaves the house every day because he wants to provide comfort and luxury to his family. The old rhyme about Baby Bunting whose father was off shooting rabbits in order to make of the fur a warm cloak for his child is the nursery presentation of this relationship of love to a man's job or profession. Intuitively children recognise that connection.

The boy watches his father's whole attitude toward his job. He likes to feel that his father enjoys his work. He experiences a childish pride if his father seems to regard his job as important, and he brags of this to his little playmates.

He listens to dad's conversation at day's end. If he is full of enthusiasm about his work, talks about progress and successes, has a humorous attitude toward the problems he has encountered, and seems to be on good terms with the people who are his associates, the child comes to think that work itself must be a lot of fun, and he looks forward to the day when he too will leave the house for a good day's labour.

It should not cause anyone surprise that doctors so often have sons who are doctors, and that a lawyer's son should go in for law, and that a father who is in a successful business has little difficulty in inducting his child into it, or that a sailor's boys take naturally to the sea. For these men—the good doctor, the successful lawyer, the man who has done well in business, the sailor who loves his ship—pass on to their offspring a real love of the work they do.

If on the other hand the father complains, if he hates his job and shows that he hates it, if when he returns in the evening he is full of complaints about his boss, his customers, his

general hard luck, he thereby creates in the consciousness of the children less a distaste for his particular type of work than a reluctance to face any work at all.

THE MOTHER'S WORK

In exact parallel is the relationship of the mother to the daughters. The happy mother who loves her home and works in it cheerfully, without reluctance, surliness, boredom, or grudging, creates in the minds of her girls the happiest possible pictures of homemaking. The girls note with pride her interest in well-planned meals. They are aware of her concern about their clothes and proud of her skill in sewing. They see her increase the beauty of the house through her labour in the garden and her adding of new adornments proportionate to the family income.

Often they learn from her without formal instruction the art and practice of the budget. Indeed on the general principle that children like to do what their elders are doing, a mother is making a fine start when her little toddler *helps* her as she works in the garden, holds the chair when she hangs a picture, and a little later sits with her while she totals up her accounts and in woman-to-woman fashion talks over with her the finances of the house.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE HOUSE

As soon as they are capable of doing anything for themselves, children should be initiated into work around the house. I have known relatively few wealthy people in my life; but one family of my acquaintance, blessed with far more than average means, required every child to have a job in the house and to do it. Though the family income came from the candy

business, the parents considered the children adequately rewarded with nickel candy bars.

So the mother—seldom the father in matters of domestic arrangements—assigns the tasks. Each child should be required to do a certain amount of ordering and tidying up of his own room. He or she should "be expected, no matter how many servants there are, to pick up personal clothes, to keep apparel and closet in fairly respectable order, to assemble soiled laundry and to put the clean laundry away when it is returned.

LAZY SONS

I once met a wealthy family in which an only son was brought up to complete laziness and a masterly ignorance of his own wardrobe. He went away to school, his trunk filled with clothes, his pockets lined with money. Yet the bills for more clothes and yet more clothes kept coming home.

Once the mother called to see him and returned to tell with delight and amusement how the "poor lad hadn't the slightest idea of how to take care of himself. He wore a shirt or a suit of underwear until it was soiled, and then he threw it into his trunk and bought another one. So there was his trunk packed to bursting with soiled laundry. The poor lamb had never even heard of a laundry."

I regret, but am not surprised, to report that he turned out to be a completely useless member of society and ultimately drove his father to drink and his mother to a succession of nervous breakdowns.

JOBS AS SYMBOLS AND TRAINING

The jobs that children are expected to do are certainly not going to be in every case efficiently done. Rather are these

jobs symbols of the children's participation in the responsibilities of the house and a training for willing work in later life.

For the successful fulfilment of these jobs wise parents give small rewards. One excellent plan is to condition the week's spending money on the basis of the fulfilment of designated tasks. In this way the small allowance becomes, not a gift, but a salary paid for work accomplished. Thus the money takes on dignity and the moneywinner a sense of his own importance.

If on the contrary the work is not done, there is meted out a definite punishment.

Work can be a horrible burden crushing the human soul. It can be a delightful participation with earth's creator in the management of that earth. Which attitude the adult will ultimately assume depends largely on the attitude instilled into the child during the days when work can be made a happy game, a chance to imitate mother and dad, a constructive habit, which, once acquired, lasts through life.

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

Democracy, as I noted before, is guaranteed only in a land which has a deep respect for authority. There can be no freedom unless people freely bind themselves to obey the laws. Any other way is chaos—or the highway down which the dictator walks to assume command over a disorganised and disillusioned mob.

So wise and truly democratic parents will maintain not only their own God-given authority but the authority of those who in some way have the right to command their children. Putting it flatly, let's say that the parents who have any real

sense and any love for the children and their country will uphold authority even when it is in conflict with their children and perhaps oversteps slightly its just limits or seems to deprive the youngsters of some of their rights.

We'll explain what we mean by that as we go along.

Before they come to any matter of outside authority, *parents have to agree among themselves to back up each other's authority*. A parent sins against authority, obedience, and his own children if he struggles for the right to control the child or tries to bribe him by being more lenient than the other parent.

Obedience is in the hands of both parents. Authority is their joint possession. If he or she wants his or her own authority respected, he or she will demand respect for the authority of both. If they wish anything like obedience, they will back up each other's orders. When each tries to dominate the child or to win him by cancelling out the orders given by the other parent, what they are really doing is undermining all authority, their own included. One parent encourages the child to disobey or to trick the other parent, only to find out that the child has learned to despise all parental authority and to pay not the least heed to the orders of either of the parents.

TEACHER'S AUTHORITY

The teacher stands before the child as an important symbol of authority. As a matter of fact the parents themselves gave the teacher that right to command. When they transmitted to the teacher the part-time care of their child, they also transmitted to him or her for those hours their own authority. So the teacher is not just someone who, having no children of his or her own, decided

to gather a few children of other people and wield a rod and a brief authority over them. He is a professional person with real authority, which the parents themselves surrendered to him and which the state at their command has sanctioned and approved.

Yet the world is full of parents who side with the child in every argument that involves the teacher. In fact they often prime the child to go back and start an argument with the teacher.

"So that old maid has been picking on you again, has she? Well, my darling, you don't need to pay the slightest attention to her. She has no right to make life miserable for you."

"Believe me, if she treats you like that again, I'll give her a piece of my mind."

"So he called you a liar, did he? Never mind telling me any more. I take it for granted that my son is no liar. Come along with me, and I'll take the hide off his back."

"The idea of a strong man like you browbeating this little kid. You've a grudge against my child, that's what you've got. You never did like him. And ever since he's been in your class, you've made life miserable for him. Well I don't intend to stand it any longer."

"I'm a friend of the mayor; and if you don't lay off my child, believe me I'll get your job."

The variants of that monologue could be continued for pages. Can't you just see the smug, complacent, delighted face of the youngster? He fixed the teacher. He went home and told his ma... or his pa... and they knew what to do. The next time the teacher wants to keep him in because he threw spitballs or corrects him for coming to school without any homework done, all he'll have to say will be, "Just wait

till I tell my mother that you're picking on me. . . I'll bring dad down to fix you." He'll have the teacher right under his thumb, with which he is even now metaphorically fingering his nose.

Teachers are used to parents like that. They bear them patiently. Yet what a blow such parents strike at all authority, their own included! They are building up a spirit of successful rebellion that will someday explode in their own faces. They are setting a premium upon all disobedience and making insubordination the excuse for their patting the little rebels on the head.

I'd go as far as to say that even if the teacher is flagrantly wrong the parent should side with him or her just to safeguard authority. Most teachers have more than their share of provocation. They do not develop "picks" and grouches unless they have been goaded by the incessant annoyance of human mosquitoes or infuriating little child gnats. The presupposition can safely be that they let a dozen offences go before they finally aim their corrective punishment.

If by some supposition the teacher is a villain and a conspirator against the peace and balance of the child, even then the worst possible example in its influence on the child would be to let the child be present at the interview. Side with the teacher when he is around. Then if you must, go and have it out with the teacher, far from the hearing and knowledge of the youngster.

RESPECT FOR CIVIL AUTHORITY

That same spirit of respect for authority and of obedience to rightly constituted government arises from the parents' attitude toward civil authority. Often at the family dinner

table the seeds of real anarchy are sown. The most anti-democratic viewpoints are expressed, and in the consciousness of the children is built up a real contempt for those who by the arrangement of democratic procedure hold the consent of the majority and the power given the civil state by God Himself.

"Indeed I do not intend to support the Government with taxes. What do I get out of it? They can't collect; I'm too smart for them. I'll contribute nothing to the Government."

"You should have seen me put it over on that traffic officer. Did I tell him where he could go! . . . That President of ours is a fool and a scamp. If he says a thing is right, I know doggone well it's absolutely wrong. . . The governor of this state is a crook and a scoundrel. He ought to be hanged. . . Well if the party can get away with a little graft, who can blame the cook for licking his own fingers?

Children can get from their parents a respectful attitude toward all symbols of authority, from the policeman on the beat to the President on the nation's biggest battle wagon. From parents they can drink in an innate distrust and contempt for authority in all its forms, contempt that eventually blossoms in something like the nihilism of old Russia, the anarchy of Red Spain, the lawlessness of gangsterland.

AUTHORITY IS DELICATE

For in all this training to obedience we must remember how delicate is the linking of all authority into its fragile unity. Man does not like to obey. Young or old he seeks any excuse to break from that particular section of the chain which binds his rebellious will. So when in the presence of children an attack is made upon authority, whether by a parent's under-

mining another parent, parents' siding with the child against the teacher, father's blasting the Government, or mother's slurring the Church, the fabric of obedience is weakened and the child's sense and value of authority get a blow.

Even in the Army the sternest top sergeant and the most experienced officers cannot do anything with the young anarchy who within his home has learned to flout authority and to give his obedience only when it suits his convenience, his likes, or his whims.

HOMEMAKING

After years of neglecting the home, the modern thinkers have come to realise that the home is the seat of the truest form of natural society and the citadel of democracy.

Parents have for generations taught their children the art of homemaking. It has been one of their great contributions to civilisation.

Here as always the real lessons of childhood are learned through actual experience in the parental home. A fine home, be it big or small, elaborate and expensive or plain and "paid for like rent", is the lovely background against which to spend childhood and adolescence. The more real the home, the more surely becomes quite subconsciously the model set up by the child for the home he means to build when he is adult.

REVOLT AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

On the other hand the lack of real homes during the last few years has caused a real throwback in the collegians with whom I have been working. In the main they came from families who lived in apartments rather than houses. Many of their parents rented instead of owned. Many of these parents

had sacrificed part of the completeness of their houses in order to have an automobile for the family.

From these facts came the throwback: The collegians during their discussion of the question "What kind of home do you want to establish?" agreed that they wanted, when they were ready to found their own family, to live in a house rather than a flat, to own the house almost from the beginning, and—if need be—to think of a house before they thought of an automobile.

That child is very fortunate who is brought up in a house that his parents own. He gets a sense of security that arises from ownership even of a small city house and lot. He feels the charm of privacy that can be found only in a house. There he has elbowroom that is not possible even in the most elaborately expensive apartments.

Homemaking results of course from the kind of place that is the home and from the spirit that pervades that place. Children are quick to observe with approval the interest their parents take in their house. The purchase of a new house is of tremendous interest and concern to the youngsters. They love to listen while father and mother, happily engaged in planning to build, discuss the details of the new dwelling. They are alert while the furnishings are considered and arranged. They get a deeply etched memory of favourite chairs and comfortable lounges, of bookcases and their location, of the tables and what was on them. They are at their parent's elbows as the process of beautification goes on. They are proud of the garden and often interested in claiming some small patch of it as their own.

All this profoundly affects their attitude toward the house

they will select for their adult years. They are very likely to plan it against the memory of the house their parents loved. That remains as the ultimate model.

Within the house the home is built around the unifying love that dwells there. So we can simply refer once more to the love of the parents for each other, to the love of the parents for the children and of the children for their parents, and to the love that is expected of the children themselves.

UNITY FROM ORDER

Homemaking depends upon more than just unity. There must be order in the unity. We have already discussed the assignments that should be given to each member of the family. When the family takes over a new house and the needs of the house have been duly considered, it is possible to assign jobs that will be more or less permanent. Sometimes the individual children will outgrow these tasks and pass them on to their younger brothers and sisters. Sometimes they are interchanged for the sake of new interest and to eliminate slovenly monotony.

TIME SCHEDULE

A wise family has a time schedule which is adhered to with sensible regularity. That word sensible is an important adjective, for it is a wooden household that sticks to its schedule, winter and summer, feast days and fast days.

There should be a time for rising. For the observance of this the most important factor is the example set by the parents. Dad knows for instance that for a decent departure—preceded by rising, a bath, shaving, prayers, breakfast, and an unhurried farewell to the family—he has to rise at a certain time. Now in the “funnies” the adventures of some comic character’s upsetting

the peace and calm of his suburb as he dashes for the bus dripping garments, coffee, and kisses for the family, may be amusing. Actually by his completely disorderly habits of rising he is setting a horrible example for the fictional child.

RISING TIME

Rising time should of course be adapted to the age of the children and their hour for retiring. It should however allow time for leisurely washing, prayers, the care of nature's important necessities, breakfast, and a bit of elbowroom before departure for school or the main pursuits of the day. Hence the exact time should be carefully set by the parents.

As for calling the children in the morning, the parents should have a simple technique: The children are called loudly, emphatically, and with the assurance that they have heard. But they are called just once. No more. If they oversleep, it is an offence that is punished by their being deprived of something they wanted to do. Mother however does not allow herself to be constituted a minute gun going off repeatedly until the children have finally been bombarded out of bed.

The hotel phone operators who ring the call bells in the morning are often instructed to ask, "Do you wish one call or two?" One call is for the adults whose parents taught them how to rise without a lazy submerging into a second slumber. The second call is for the people who never pay any attention to the first call and know they will be tormented to rise, until in sheer desperation, sore, irritated, and in a bad mood to start the day, they are finally jimmied out of bed.

The family that is learning order as well as unity then is called just once. That call comes exactly at the right time. The child does not reason from experience: "Oh that call means

I still have fifteen minutes; mother calls me early to allow me an extra quarter of an hour's sleep." Seven o'clock means seven o'clock. The whole family knows it and acts accordingly.

All the family is allowed a latitude of course, as on holidays, when sleep is prolonged. But even there order prevails. It is announced to the children that either "You may sleep until you wake in the morning," or "You may sleep until nine o'clock, when I shall call you."

PROMPT RETIRING

I was visiting some time ago a family blessed with five charming little girls. They were exquisitely mannered. They were friendly and sweet, though you had the sense of the order that marked their lives. Each had her job and did it. One of the youngsters set the dinner table. Two of them disappeared after dinner to help with the clearing away. The two eldest did the dishes while their mother sat and talked with her guests.

At eight-thirty we were in the midst of animated discussions, with the five little girls much involved. "It's time for you three youngest to go to bed," said the mother, quietly. Without a single sign of argument or wheedling they rose, kissed the family, shook hands with the guests, and retired to their rooms.

That was a perfect example of the orderly lives that should be arranged for children if they are to be well mannered.

MEALS PROMPTLY

Meals in the well-knit family are set for a definite time, and a time convenient for all. Without fail they take place at that time. The parents themselves take the lead by being on time. The children are expected to be home unless the

most valid of excuses can be offered—and then only rarely and most convincingly.

Children will never have any sense of orderly living if they are permitted to straggle in at all hours, holding up the meals, causing the meat to become overdone, the vegetables to become soggy, while with no excuse or the most flimsy ones they have allowed anything that captured their fancy to derail them or hold them at way stations.

FUN TOGETHER

Home is a compound blend of love, affection, unity, order—and enjoyment. Most of youth's normal enjoyment belongs with first right in the family. Much of it can be shared with those guests who come or are invited.

If people really love one another, they sincerely enjoy being together; and if children are early taught to regard their homes not merely as supply depots where they take on food and change hats but as centres of their recreational life, they will not be inclined to escape their homes so soon as their wings are strong enough to bear them.

Laughter should be easy. Each one should be given a chance to take his part, and the adventures of the child of sub-kindergarten age should be given their proportional place with the really important business deal about which father wants to brag.

A well-cemented home has its games, possibly its game room, certainly its intramural tournaments. A ping-pong or table-tennis set will hold a family at home and bring in the neighbours.

Parents owe it to their children to teach them the rudiments of card playing. Once they have mastered the simple

games, they will move on to more difficult ones, always with an improvement of that social asset known as card sense.

In the living room music will bind the family in a unity that is notably delightful. How wonderful if the children have learned to play musical instruments that make possible their own small orchestra. Families love to rally round the piano and just sing—loudly and with a sublime lack of restraint.

The victrola can serve as a binding force if each contributes in turn his records and plays impresario as well as audience.

GUESTS

The art of homemaking includes of course the correct treatment of guests. I'm going to ask for more time on this somewhat later. Just now let's merely touch a few points important to homemaking.

First of all, all guests should be met by all the family. There is no need for the children's lingering after the introductions, when they would much rather be playing their games than listening to Miss Longwind describing her operation. But merely as a matter of the participation of all in the life of all, the children should be brought in to meet adult visitors, as the adults should come in to meet the guests of the children. No one member of the family likes to be kept in exile while the rest of the family is entertaining friends.

Guests should be casual rather than formal. By that I mean that frequent callers, old and young, who just drop in and out, play a game or two, take part in a bit of conversation, touch the family circle on the rim and are gone again are more to be encouraged than are guests for whom there must be long preparation, elaborate plans, and a studied party. A real home is a place to which friends come easily. They do not

need an invitation for precisely this day or evening between the strict limits of this hour and that one. They come; they are welcomed; they play a brief part in the life of the family; and they are gone till the next time.

For their entertainment and to train the children to hospitality, almost any family of even moderate means can have soft drinks. Food and drink are great strengtheners of friendship. Easy access to them is one of the signs of a home ruled by liberal-minded parents with the joy of their children in mind.

When the guests have gone, they are spoken of and remembered with kindness. If parents see flagrant failures in guests, conduct that should serve as a warning to the children, they are wise to point them out, but always gently and with what excuses they can find.

After the guests are gone, the children should not be initiated into a massacre of the now-absent. Parents are wise if they supplement their face-to-face welcome of guests with absentee charity. The receiving of guests is a great lesson to the children. *Charity to all is an important element in homemaking.*

PARENTS AND THEIR AUTHORITY

Perhaps the reason that so much of the world has swung almost without a protest into the grip of the tyrants is that the vast majority of us humans would rather be ordered than give orders.

Yet parents cannot escape this exercising of authority. Indeed a well-ordered home is impossible without authority. Children are deprived of enormous character training if their parents are either unwilling to give orders, shaky in their whole grip on authority, changeable and "jittery" about what they want from the children, and in the end given to shrugging their shoulders with a helpless, "Oh I can't do a thing with these children of mine!"

Children themselves miss the firm hand and the reasonable control. Parents must remember that they have that God-given authority, which, as I have insisted before, they cannot shirk or pass on to someone else. All the love they show their children is so much sand piled around a building if there is not first the strong steelwork of authority demanding obedience to reasonable love-inspired commands.

AUTHORITY BELONGS TO BOTH

We must remember that both the father and the mother share the job of parenthood. Authority is vested in both, though primarily it rests with the father as the head of the family.

If the two labour together in the forming of their children and share their authority in the single purpose of bringing up strong well-trained, self-controlled, and splendidly disciplined children, then there is family unity resulting in youthful strength.

If the father gives the example of the masculine virtues and the mother that of the feminine virtues, and if both unite in the commands that make the house a civilised place to live in, the parts have gone a long way toward making their children complete and in measure perfect human beings.

ORDER SHOULD BE CLEAR

There is an art in the giving of orders, and parents should learn that art. Before doing anything else, they might try to recall the kind of orders they liked—and still like—versus the kind that left them irritated, foggy, completely at sea. If over them even now there is someone who is in a position to give them orders, his well-given orders might be a standard, his badly given orders a warning.

It sounds almost silly to insist that in the giving of orders parents should be clear. An order that people do not understand is no order at all. So when parents mumble their orders under their breath or express them in words the child doesn't understand, what right have they to be irritated if the order is not obeyed? All of us at some exasperating time or other have received orders from someone who shot them out of the corner of his mouth or left before the commands were half finished.

The wise adult, especially the wise parent, makes sure that when he gives an order the child knows the words he uses and is clear about what is wanted, when it is wanted, and—if that is important—how the order is to be carried out.

"Get me a loaf of bread," says the mother, "when you

get around to it." Well children never get around to anything. And if two hours later she asks, indignantly, "And where is that loaf of bread?" the child really has the just though quite unacceptable excuse that the order didn't mean a thing.

No child should be turned into a sort of minor servant. Yet parents do that too readily. It is quite too simple for adults to sit back and dispatch the children hither and yon on necessary and unnecessary errands. The children quite rightly resent it.

Children, with their young legs and tremendous vitality, should naturally be trained to do small errands for their elders. But it is one thing on occasion to ask a child to do an errand and another to keep him shuttling back and forth as an unpaid messenger.

"Darling, run up to my room and get me the scissors. . . Will you trot down to the tennis court and see if I left my sweater there? . . . Run out to the kitchen and fetch mother a drink, will you? . . . Is that my pipe over there on the table? Just get it and hand it to me. . . How about chasing up to my room and bringing down my slippers? . . . I forgot the paper tonight. Here's some money; run out to the store and buy one—and bring back the exact change."

Any one of these orders is in itself fully justified. Children should be trained to a politeness and unselfishness that consider the comforts and needs of their parents. But an incessant barrage of orders that ship them about like page boys in the Senate is clear indication of parental laziness and lack of organisation.

ORDERS THAT INTERRUPT

Especially are children justified in resenting these constant orders if in addition to their being frequent they interrupt the

activities to which children have a right. In the life of every child should be periods of play which he can regard as his own. Nothing else is more likely to inspire him with resentment of orders or with a real dislike for authority than recurrent interruptions of his legitimate play.

The bases are full; little Willie has just stepped up to bat, his whole determination bent on knocking the ball over the fence. The fate of the "Little Catamounts" rests with his bat. Then from the family back door comes a peremptory, demanding voice:

"Wil-lee! Come here right away. I want you to go to the store and get me a cake of yeast."

No wonder Willie shudders at the sound of his mother's voice. No wonder he is fuming when he comes to her. He is convinced that a little more system around the house would prevent her running out of yeast in the ninth innings with the bases full and the score four to two against his team. And in that he may be right.

ORDERS THAT TAX MEMORY

Orders have a certain element of annoyance about them when they demand a strain on the memory. My own dear mother had the habit of giving me an errand to run "on the way home from school". The events of the school day were always engrossing to me. They drove everything else out of my mind. I had the gift of concentration, and I worked hard at whatever I was doing. So by the end of the day any order that had been given me in the early morning—"Buy me a spool of thread that matches this one" or "Be sure to pick up a loaf of bread on your way home"—had been completely knocked from my memory. Oh I was perfectly willing to trot back and

complete the unfinished business. But it really is asking too much of youthful concentration for a child to remember a trifling order for some seven busy, exciting hours.

NO HUMILIATING ORDERS

Parents can well consider the advisability of asking children to do things which children find humiliating. Of course it will be to the good of their character development to overcome this reluctance. But does an order that shames a child improve obedience?

There are orders that boys just cannot abide—anything for example that they regard as sissy. Many boys—though not all—hate to be sent to the store to buy anything feminine, even a spool of thread, or a package of safety pins. They hate to be told to do things they regard as the office of a girl. Willingly will they mow a lawn if they are at all well brought up; but they blush at and hate the idea of dusting a room. This is an extreme case: The boy would regard as normal an order to beat the rug hanging on the line and as altogether out of dignity a command connected in any way with dressmaking.

SAY "PLEASE"

Parents do not lose caste or weaken their authority when they precede a command with, "Please," and follow its execution with, "Thank you". Many a child has a queer but altogether understandable human instinct that makes him utter, far back in his throat, "I don't mind doing it; not a bit. But why can't they say please when they ask me?" Any adult who has had to take orders without the soothing lubricant of good manners knows exactly how the child feels—and girls are as quick to resent the "un-pleased" command as are boys.

...AND "THANK YOU"

As for "thank you"—that is a wonderful way to make authority not only respected but loved. "That was a good job you did; thank you very much... I'm grateful that you took care of that so promptly." The child smiles. The parents smile. The order has been forgotten in the child's pleasure of having done something for an appreciative elder.

PUNISHMENT WHEN DESERVED

The obverse of this spirit of gratitude is of course the clear and proportionate punishment meted out for authority flouted and orders disobeyed. Children are only a little less thoughtless than their elders. How we oldsters need constantly to be reminded—by the law, the prick of our conscience, the supervision of those who employ our services—of the things we have neglected or completely forgotten to do!

So the connection of an order obeyed with a proportionate reward or the failure of execution with a proportionate punishment will be a strong nudge to the memory as well as an effective threat to the recalcitrant.

"You've done your work well this week; I'm delighted. We're all going to the movies tonight."

"You simply disregarded my plain wishes in this matter. Sorry but you are not going to the show this evening."

THE PUNISHMENT OF LOSS

Whatever may be said for spankings as punishment for very young children, it is my conviction, based on what little experience I have been able to gather, that the far more effective punishment is the depriving them of things they want or want to do

"You were downright disobedient in this particular case. You can't go out with the rest of the children this evening. I dislike to do this; but since you seem not to want to do what I ask, I just can't let you do what you yourself want to do."

Depriving youngsters of the things they love to do (never of essential food or other necessities of life) is the best possible sanction for obedience. It does no slightest physical harm, yet it makes perfectly clear the parents' intention to be obeyed. That procedure is as effective with young people in college as it is with the little five-year-old.

NO REASONS GIVEN

Orders pertaining to obedience to parents really belong in a realm that is beyond the reach of discussion, wheedling, parental capriciousness, or favouritism.

For the ordinary orders that are given, no reason need be assigned. For extraordinary orders that are unusual and that demand perhaps more than customary obedience, a reason may well be given.

So "Turn off the light and go to sleep" needs no long explanation of the value of sleep nor vivid examples of what happens to children who stay awake nights and don't get their proper rest. This holds for all the normal rules by which a well-trained child lives; it is not necessary to explain why he must eat everything that is placed before him, why he mustn't whine, why he must practise decent good manners, and why he must go to bed at a certain hour.

As the child grows older, he is dignified by his parents' offering some reasons for unusual orders. "You are going to bed earlier tonight because daylight saving starts tomorrow and we lose an hour's sleep. . . I don't want you to play

in that park because you have to cross unguarded railway tracks in order to get there."

WITHOUT DISCUSSION

If a reason is given, there should normally be no discussion.

Now it may be that the reason is not valid; the child knows something that cancels that reason. In a well-ordered house the child may present his counterreason.

"But, mother, I don't cross the tracks to go to that park. There is one place where the street is below the tracks, and I always go that way."

Presenting a counterreason respectfully is one thing; arguing and discussing the value of the parents' reason is quite another. That sort of debate is unpardonable. "Oh, mother, don't be silly; I know how to cross tracks. All the kids cross tracks. Don't be so scardy-cat, mother. Nobody ever gets hurt there."

Anything of this kind is destructive of well-ordered authority.

Whenever a reason is given however, parents must be sure that it is the real one. Little children may be fooled into eating their carrots by the promise that carrots will give them curly hair; older children will not be taken in by a fake reason.

If parents give fake reasons for their refusals or orders, then they take the chance of the youngsters' removing the reasons. Little daughter wants to go out with some newcomers in the neighbourhood whom her mother doesn't approve of. Mother doesn't want to give the real reason for her refusal. So she says, "No; you can't go. It's chilly, and I haven't your winter clothes out yet." The child disappears. Minutes later she reappears fully clad in her winter clothes. She had gone up and got the clothes out of the trunk and put them

on. "Now can I go, mother?" she demands. The mother is stuck with a false reason on her hands.

This danger holds especially with older children. If no reason is given, they have no barrier to remove, no way of justifying their disobedience or twisting their parents their way. If they are given a false reason, they despise their parents. If they are given a true reason, they may go out and get this removed.

"No, daughter, you can't go out tonight. I don't want you travelling in the streetcars late at night."

Daughter listens to that reason; the real reason is that mother wishes her to stay home and study. Daughter calls up friends. In five minutes she is dressed and ready to go out.

"It's all fixed, mother. I shan't have to travel in the streetcars. Bill is taking me in the family car."

Again mother is stuck.

WHEEDLING AND WHINING

Along this same line is the whole matter of wheedling. Even the youngest child learns whether or not he can wheedle his parents out of an order or by whining make them give in.

"Sorry, my child, but you can't go out."

"Ah, mother, why not? . . . Please just this once. . . I think you're mean . . . all the other children are going out. . . Why are you so cruel to me? . . . Please, can't I?"—to the accompaniment of tears.

At length in sheer despair the mother lets the insincere little nuisance have his way.

You may be sure that a child who has once learned the power of his own wheedling and whining will capitalise on his

nuisance value. He soon wraps his parents round in the "tyranny of tears". He tries it once, and it works; he tries it a second time, and it works. From that day on he knows that all he has to do is make life sufficiently miserable for his parents and in sheer desperation they'll let him have his way, just to be free from his pestering and wailing.

On the other hand no child wastes his energy on this sort of thing once he has learned it doesn't work. In fact he may be wisely taught that pestering and wailing result in an increase of his punishment. So he does as he's told or takes his medicine calmly. He can't crack over his parents' ruffled heads the whip of his wheedling and whining.

CAPRICIOUS PARENTS

The shifting capriciousness of parents works enormous harm to authority. Children regard such weather-vane standards first with amazement, then with suspicion, and finally with a conviction that they're dealing with parents whose orders depend entirely upon what they had to eat or how restfully or restlessly they slept last night.

Thoughtless parents will shift in chameleon fashion. What they sternly forbid today, they permit without a murmur tomorrow. What drives them mad during an afternoon, they think a big joke in the evening. They announce formally, "Believe me, we'll never have that sort of nonsense again in this house," and then they promptly forget all about this anathema. They are smiling approval when their children are fresh little brats in the presence of company, and they bat them over the ears for precisely the same conduct when there is no stranger around to see them.

Children soon argue to the conclusion that authority is dependent upon digestion or some other whimsical factor that

they, the children, certainly can't control. They do not grow obedient; they become watchfully observant of their parents' moods.

"How's dad feeling today? Fine? Go ahead then; it's O.K."

"Mother has a new dress? Swell. Now's the time to ask her for that permission."

"Don't bother mother today; she and dad had a fight."

Like the husband who remarked that his wife was endowed with a strong whim, the children feel that they are governed by the law of unpredictable caprice. There are few more intolerable forms of government.

LAWS, FIXED OR TRANSIENT

Certain regulations for the house should stand permanent and fixed: promptness in rising, good manners at table, the performing of assigned tasks, friendliness and decent courtesy among the children, respectful ways of addressing elders, prompt retiring, and other things of that sort.

Certain regulations should be known to depend upon circumstances: going out, companions, amount of time for fun, running errands, and other things of that nature.

Exceptions should be made—but they should be clearly indicated as exceptions.

"As a rule I don't let you go to the drugstore for sodas unless a grown-up goes with you. But because you've a little cousin visiting you and I think it would be pleasant for both of you, you may go by yourselves and order whatever you like."

"Tonight your aunt and uncle are going to visit us. You may stay up past your regular bedtime, but that is just for tonight."

A thing absolutely to be prevented is the child's becoming convinced that he is governed by unpredictable adults who don't know their own minds and yet are trying to form his. That results in chaos.

FAVOURITISM

It is hard for a parent not to have favourites. If his extra affection for any one child however makes him treat that child differently from the rest, his whole system of discipline is shot. Or if he does not like one child quite so well and is in consequence harder on him than on the others, the structure of his authority collapses.

If the child is weak and sick, discipline in his case may have to be different—though frankly too many children have been spoiled because they were pampered and allowed to run wild during some period of illness. When the child has been notably good, discipline can be relaxed in his case. The understanding must however be clear that he must keep that high standard if he wishes the favours to be continued.

Any parental favouritism creates the clearest excuse of injustice. The favourite crows over the others and comes to be cordially disliked. The underdog is taunted by the rest of the children and develops into a little enemy of society.

However much parents may be drawn to one child or repelled from another, if they value their own authority and the training their lessons in obedience are meant to give to all the children, they will be just with an even hand and will love all their children deeply enough to give them the unquestionable benefit of discipline and training and the touch of a firm, guiding, and sustaining hand.

THE ROAD TO GOOD MANNERS

Good manners are the easiest things in the world to recognise.

That fact does not however prevent them from being extremely difficult to define. Certainly they do not consist in the use of the approved fork-of-the-moment or in the precise sort of letter paper to differentiate a letter of condolence from an invitation to a party. We all realise instinctively that good manners are far beyond these transient trifles. But to give a very clear explanation of just what makes manners good—that's a difficult assignment.

Good manners are a beautiful expression of our love for our fellow men and of our desire to make life a little easier and smoother and happier for them. They are the curb we put upon our animal instincts, which would lead us to grab, push, shove, make unpleasant and grating noises, become involved with the sensitive nerves or the reasonable reticences of others.

They are really charity in action.

CHARITY AT HOME

Charity, runs the threadbare proverb, begins at home. And the cynic promptly adds, "... and usually stays there." Would that the first part of that ancient truism were really true! For if charity did begin at home, it could not conceivably be content only to stay there. Charity, love, is the most

expansive' thing in the world. It must seek opportunity for expression. It must affect as many people as possible. So were it true that charity begins within modern homes and that there love is taught expertly and learned naturally, good manners would be the rule of modern living.

Perhaps we have been tricked by the word charity. That beautiful old transliteration from the Latin word *caritas* has come to mean of course the penny dropped into the poor man's hat, while it should mean human love in all its finest expressions. Yet we need to know little indeed of life in order to see the connection between love and good manners.

There is the young man who falls in love with the one-and-only girl. During the period when love is deep and tender, his manners are startlingly fine. He thinks constantly of her likes and shields her against any least blow from rough circumstances. He brings her flowers. He consults her wishes on everything. He steps aside for her, places his hand assistingly under her elbow, phones her on any slightest pretext, writes to her constantly. Later on as love cools, he may develop his ursine nature. As long as love is warm, politeness blossoms in its radiance.

REAL LOVE

Hence if the home were a place of real love, we should have to spend but little time worrying about good manners. Perhaps it would be wisest for a time to forget all about manners and to spend our energies to build up love. For with love come politeness and courtesy and consideration, all of which must be present if good manners are not to become as topical as the etiquette put on and off with formal dress.

I have emphasised recurrently the importance of love

between the mother and the father. That is the source of the family's love.

But all of us have heard, times beyond recall, the opinion that children are lucky who are brought up in big families. Often the propounders of this sage human experience really mean that big families are likely to keep the parents from spoiling the children. The mother and the father of twelve children are not likely to have time to convert little Millicent into a neurotic or to coddle little Percy when he stubs his toe or to side with Marmaduke against Myrtle when he demands exclusive right to the dumpcart.

But that is merely the negative side. Big families are important because they can be such magnificent schools of human love. The parents find their capacity for love growing with each new child that God sends them. The children themselves, instead of developing into self-centred little egoists, have, because they are surrounded by those near them in blood, the chance to express love naturally, simply, and easily.

Among these "carefully spaced children", so much praised by the modern birth controllers, there is often likely to be a vast difference in years that separates the youngsters from one another. To a child of eight a child of four or three seems absurdly young. A boy entering high school refers to his brother in fifth standard as "that baby". If the children are quite close together in years, they develop toward each other a closeness not only of blood and natural affection but of interest.

GOOD MANNERS AT HOME

So it is impossible to talk of good manners without the wistful hope that they will spring from the deep and parentally cultivated love which exists in the home. Only there can the

child be equipped with the foundations of good manners. Only there can he be provided with that politeness which is based on a respect for the rights of others. If the parents set the children the example, the children will be attracted by the charm of good manners as they see their elders walk these gracious ways. If the parents expect good manners between the brothers and the sisters, those good manners later on will be part of life's equipment for those children. If the parents are interested in instilling into their youngsters that gentleness which is the essential element that makes of a mere man a gentleman and of a plain woman a lady, their influence will be plainly marked in the conduct of their children.

If the parents' manners are bad and their training of their children's manners slovenly or nonexistent, their children will, unless by some miracle, turn out to be little barbarians or boors or hoodlums; or they will recurrently break through the thin veneer of overlaid politeness and betray what the English language has come to call, devastatingly, "bad breeding".

WHAT ARE GOOD MANNERS?

No definition of good manners will ever be final. But we offer this addition to the long list of definitions: Good manners are the expression of controlled strength. The weakling who does not hurt his fellows is not necessarily well mannered; he may be only afraid. The strong man or woman who is kind to others and respectful of their feelings has learned the magnificent art of directing his or her strength and controlling animal vitality.

In good manners lies the true art of winning friends and influencing people. It should not be difficult to show children by example and out of their own growing experience how welcome the

well-mannered person is in any circle. They can see that exemplified among their own little friends. Parents can further point this out. People like to have visit them the child who is well behaved, who has a decent regard for their rights, who asks permission before he touches their things, who thanks them after he has played with their things, who willingly shares with them his own things. Children cannot fail to notice how impressed adults are with the youngsters who know how to accept an introduction and to meet strangers.

Lifelong good manners mean real popularity, with the later success in life that comes from popularity. Good manners bring their possessor to the attention of the right people and make easier the climb to positions worth striving for. Social success and financial success are enormously facilitated for the person who knows the right thing to do and does it.

BAD MANNERS NOT CLEVER

Bad manners are not a sign of cleverness; they are the clearest indication of selfishness. A bad-mannered person may actually betray a real stupidity which holds that the rest of the world is unworthy of his effort to win and retain anyone's friendship. Bad manners do not even suggest strength. They mark merely uncontrolled greed and selfishness. They are not the mark of sophistication. They often indicate crass ignorance of the most fundamental human likes and dislikes. They are a sign that one has not learned what to do and how to do it. They show clearly that one has not seen places or done things.

Bad manners are an easily recognised sign of the most ungracious disregard for others. They flow from utter egotism and egoism. Let's remember that from the viewpoint of

the parents bad manners indicate in a child his emergence from a home without charm and culture and from parents who either did not know how to train their children or were too hard at work earning the necessities of life or too unaware of the decencies of civilised living to pass on to their offspring a knowledge of the proper things to do and the proper way to deal with people.

CUSTOMS VERSUS GOOD MANNERS

Good manners are eternal and unchanging. Customs on the contrary and etiquette may change with every season.

A tendency to gulp one's food is always bad. Failure to thank a hostess for her entertainment can never be other than rude. Deliberately to cultivate sloppy dress on occasions that call for dignity and reverence can never be anything else than boorish.

It is rather significant that good manners proceed from good homes but not necessarily from wealthy ones. Some of the worst-mannered whelps I have ever had the misfortune to hear yelp came from homes that were rotten with money. That seemed to be the point: The homes and the samples sent from those homes really were *rotten* with money. Some of the finest youthful manners I've ever encountered were displayed by children of the poor. Many a newsboy who sells you a paper on the corner could teach the sons and daughters of many of the rich all about the good manners which win friends and attract people instantly. The best manners however are likely to come out of good, normal middle-class homes, where the parents have enough time to pay attention to the training of their children and just enough money to make possible pleasantly comfortable surroundings and not so much

that they can spoil their children or give them the arrogance, human indifference, boredom, and callousness that come with too liberal an income.

The display of good manners between parents themselves is the first great lesson given to the children.

The parents' way of speaking to each other is most important. If their speech is affectionate, if they address each other gently, no child can escape the influence of that example. Between them are hurled no jibes, no insults. When they want something done, they ask for it politely. Absent are loud commands, orders without the prelude "please", or favours accepted without a thank-you. Never in speaking to each other do they use unpleasant or objectionable—much less insulting—names. And their attitude toward "kidding" is that it has no place between them.

POLITE PARENTAL SPEECH

Children learn fundamental good manners from the way their parents speak to each other or about each other. It is bad to let the youngsters hear any of the unpleasant names that are used even jokingly to designate parents. There is nothing really funny about "the old lady, my old man, the ball and chain, the old grouch, the straw boss, the nuisance," or any other names of that kind. It is deplorable manners for the man to introduce his wife with a casual "Folks, meet the wife"—almost as bad as the old custom of signing the hotel register, "Mr George Jones and wife".

Decent parents will realise the utter bad manners of their talking about one another to strangers—especially if one of the children happens to be listening. Infinitely worse is the habit of parents' talking slightly to the children themselves.

POLITENESS BETWEEN PARENTS

Politeness toward each other is something that parents actually owe to each other—quite aside from the fact that politeness will profoundly affect the manners of the children. So a civilised husband gives to his wife exactly the same polite consideration that any gentleman is expected to give to a refined woman.

He helps her with her chair when they sit down to the table alone or with the children. He relinquishes this only when he has taught his eldest son to do it in his place. He stands on those occasions when a gentleman stands to welcome a lady, and he expects the boys of the family to do this too. He helps her on and off with her coat; and if the wrap is heavy, he hangs it up for her. When his wife drops anything, he hastens to pick it up for her—until his sons in their youthful agility have reached the point where they can do it more readily.

He shows real consideration for her in the way he lets her have those parts of the newspaper that she prefers. He does not take her detective story away from her until she has tracked the unknown murderer to his unmasking. He lets her have her turn to select the programmes on the radio. If they go to a motion picture, he may suggest his choice, but with due regard for her veto or her countersuggestion.

All this could be summarised thus: that the children find in their parents the manners that mark the courtship and the honeymoon. Their attitude toward their mother and ultimately toward all other women will be largely influenced by their father's blend of love and politeness.

These good manners are displayed in parallel ways of course by the mother. She remembers her husband's tastes and defers to them. She treats him with the same politeness that she

shows to other men. She is a lady measuring up to his stature as a gentleman. Through her example the good manners of her children will inevitably be insured.

TABLE MANNERS

The table is one of the first classrooms of good manners.

Fastidiousness and finicky ways are not, needless to say, good manners. They are the sign of poor training or a bad digestion, and neither makes for a pleasant social being. Early, indeed from the very beginning, the youngsters are taught the general rules of good manners.

Among the children there must be no grabbing—either with the hands or with a whine. Like little animals they tend to reach their chubby little hooks for what they want, even on the plate that is next to them or across from them. Or like the reasoning little humans they are, they soon learn that they can trick their elders or even their peers out of choice bits if they put on scenes, whine, or make an intolerable fuss.

Due attention should be paid to the importance of cultivating conversation at the dinner table. Into this conversation children must early be drawn. They must learn to talk in the intervals of eating and not permit either operation to impede the other. A man who has learned simultaneously to handle the main course and a pleasant topic of conversation is likely to be a well mannered man.

BASIC PRACTICES

Individual customs for eating may change with the times. Once on a time no one dared tip a soup dish. Now, I believe, it may be tipped slightly, away from the eater. Once on a time a diner proved his mastery over his appetite by leaving

a small quantity of food on his plate. Now he indicates his regard for economy by eating everything down to the last crumb.

Despite such changes a gentleman needs no rule book to teach him that the consumption of soup should never be a vocal affair and that one should not clean one's plate in the manner of a starving man who is down to his last sea biscuit.

Children can be given quite early the reasons that underlie good manners at table. A man proves he is human by his control of that animal appetite which might make him wolf his food or tear it greedily from the hands of his neighbour. As a Christian he tries to demonstrate his control over his lower, physical nature. His good manners, which are rooted in his social, spiritual nature, triumph over his greediness and hunger, which are instincts that he shares with the animals.

SIMPLE FUNDAMENTALS

Little children are seldom more charming than when they are displaying a mastery over their knives and forks. They know how to hold them, lightly yet firmly with grace yet without a grip. They learn to guide them to their mouths without spilling the food in a greasy train along the plate and their clothing. They learn not to bite the fork as if they were relishing the tines. They do not scrape their knives or forks against the china. They do not so overload their spoons and forks that the others at table anxiously watch the progress, convinced that the safe arrival of the food into the mouth is impossible.

Any sign of haste or greed is outlawed. Authorities in boys' boarding schools are constantly struggling against the speed with which youngsters plough their way through a plate of

food as if it were a snowdrift between them and the playing fields.

STATING TILL THE END OF MEALS

If the parents adopt at home a leisurely method of eating, this is bound to affect the children. To make this certain, children should early learn that even if they bolt their food and are finished before the rest they still will have to remain at the table for a reasonable time. If in their mad anxiety to get back to their games they eat their meat in two canine bites and decline to partake of dessert, that is not going to help them one bit. Meals take a full half hour or more, and everyone remains at the table until the entire family is finished.

Under no circumstances should the parents let a child leave the table without his first asking permission and explaining why he has to be an exception to what is really a sort of sacred family ritual.

UNSELFISHNESS

We all of us get a trained eye for the better cuts and the choicer bits of food. In a well-mannered family however mother gets first choice. After that dad sees to it that each on successive days gets what is regarded as the choicer item.

So children must be taught to take their turn at the better cuts and be satisfied if once in several days they get the piece of layer cake that has the heavy outside frosting or are served the crisp, top piece of the beef.

All through the meal the mother, with the same tact and mastery of her dinner table which she would show if at the table were invited guests, leads the conversation. If a child is silent and too concentrated on food, she tosses him a question that

demands more than a yes or a no answer. The table is one place where surliness and moodiness cannot be permitted. If such moods are controlled there, they are much easier to control elsewhere.

CLEANLINESS AND PROPER CLOTHES

Prior to all meals the parents set for the children an example of cleanliness and proper attire which all must follow. Hands are washed and, if need be, inspected before meals. If a child comes to table with unwashed hands, he is sent away to wash them before he is served. No soiled clothes are permitted to be worn at table, nor outfits that reek of the ball field or of manual work.

It is decidedly worth considering whether, except in very hot weather, coats or their equivalent should not be worn by the men and the boys. Certainly in the case of the girls boudoir apparel should be outlawed. The rest of the diners should not be required to sit across the table from a female in a wrapper, her hair in curlers, her face covered with cold cream.

In this as in other things the children will follow, not the commands, but the example and lead of their parents.

PARTIES

In civilised society the social party plays a most important role.

In practice parties may be not only the expressions but actually the schools of charity and good manners. They manifest friendships and promote them. They develop the natural social instinct. They make us more fully human and more completely humane.

From the years before the dawn of reason children actually

experience the most intense interest in the parties given by their parents. So if parents are interested in teaching their children good manners and social usage, they are wise to let them feel they have a part in the shaping of the parties.

They can be allowed to remain to watch and listen while the lists are being made. A mother and a father can for the direct benefit of their children discuss why they are inviting this friend and why they are not inviting that acquaintance.

LISTING THE GUESTS

"I think we should invite the Browns; they invited us to dinner two weeks ago. . . The Smyths are new in the neighbourhood; this would be a pleasant opportunity to have them meet our friends. . . The Greens are always such charming guests; let's have them. . . Wouldn't it help your business if you were nice to Mr Blue? Let's invite him and his wife."

Or. . .

"I do not think the Scarlets enjoyed themselves the last time they came. Perhaps we can leave them out this time. . . The Blanks are so noisy; they wouldn't fit into a party like this. . . We've had the Exes twice now, and they've not invited us; I think we'd better wait until they ask us before we invite them again."

As children listen with the engrossed alertness of all youngsters following the plans of their parents, they get a realisation of the fact that though parties are primarily for fun and good times they should be used to repay debts, establish friendships, make new and worth-while connections, and welcome newcomers. At the same time they can learn that people are not invited again if they are bores or act bored, if they are boisterous or bad mannered, if they selfishly expect to be asked

continuously and make no effort to repay the favours they have received.

Subtly children must be made aware however that guests are not restricted to the profitable and personally attractive. That would be the normal tendency of the child: to pick as his guests the children who would be sure to bring a present to the party or those whom he personally likes. The wider range of charity as it is exhibited through parties must be made quite clear to the child.

PLEASED WATCHERS

Even a small gathering will throw the children into a pleasurable flurry. They can be allowed to watch the progress of the preparations. The food is discussed in their presence. They hear mother and dad deciding what to do with the guests when they arrive; what games, if any, they would like to play; how the guests should be seated at the table. The woman, as the dominant social factor in social life, is seen always to be exercising her right of management and jurisdiction.

When the actual party convenes, if the children are at all old enough, the wisest policy certainly seems to be to give them a brief taste of such a social event. They can be dressed and allowed to meet the guests. They can even sit around for a brief time before they are exiled to their own quarters and bed.

Even from their exile the children will be following the course of the party. They come to know that mother and dad can put on a party which is wonderfully pleasant and free from any sign of boisterousness. They know that fun can be had through activity unmarked by romping. They come to see the relationship of good food and drink to conversation and

social friendships. They can see too the adult practices of self-control in eating and drinking.

GAMES AND CONVERSATION

They come to know with interest the value of civilised games and conversation. They may even watch their mother and father handle expertly but without offence those who tend to slip slightly out of line. They can learn how to draw out the shy and the hesitant and to subordinate their own personal preferences to an attitude of friendliness toward all.

Then when the children come to plan and arrange for their own parties, under the direction of their parents they can develop small replicas of their parents' achievements.

THE CHILDREN'S PARTIES

As soon as the child is old enough to have friends, he should begin to have small parties of his own. During his very early years these are arranged and prepared for almost entirely by the parents. But as soon as possible the child should be encouraged to take an active part in the preliminaries.

A list of his young friends is drawn up, modelled on his parents' procedure in that matter. He is encouraged to repay obligations, to win friends, to destroy any growing cliquishness. He is reminded that it is important to invite the shy and diffident and to include the less attractive as well as the very self-assured and popular. The fun element in the party will be clear enough in his mind; the charity and social-obligation elements will need parents' emphasising.

The child and his mother—and even his father, if the father is smart and willing—plan the course the party is to take. Successful children's parties are not left to chance or the

ingenuity and resourcefulness of the youngsters. The parents should talk over with the child the things he'd like to have his guests do. Into the child's mind can deftly be inserted ideas which he will think he originated and which he spontaneously suggests for the programme. But the fun must be directed long in advance, the games selected, the course of the party mapped. Otherwise the first half hour to hour of silent, solitary getting acquainted will be followed by chaos and "rough-house" for the remainder of the afternoon.

RECEIVING

Even the smallest child must be made to feel that he or she is the host or hostess of his or her own party. As such he is dressed and ready to receive the guests when they arrive. Again we can point to the charm of a child who knows how to meet his friends when they arrive, to shake hands with them, and to say however formally and stiltedly the necessary words of welcome.

PRESENTS

If it is a birthday party and there are presents, he accepts them and says the proper words of thanks.

Custom seems to disagree on whether he opens the presents while the guests are with him or whether he puts them aside to be opened after the small guests disappear at the end of the afternoon. My mother was of the put-away-till-later school. She maintained that all children could not afford to bring equally good presents; hence if none of the presents were opened till after the guests' departure, no one was embarrassed by the inferiority of his gift. Besides she thought that if the gifts were taken out of their wrappings while the guests were present,

the small guests were likely to wreck them—to the sad loss of the recipient. She felt that the unwrapped gifts would serve to interfere with the planned party.

I merely present her reasons. Whatever the attitude, the child should be taught to be grateful, to say a proper thank-you, and to be really appreciative later on.

INTRODUCTION

The youngster can early be taught how to introduce to one another those of his friends who have never met before. Those formulas are simple enough for youthful mastery, and they are part of life's social equipment.

WIDE FRIENDSHIPS

Once the party begins, the mother—or the mother and the father, if both are present—should watch whether or not their child is playing with only a few or is universal in his friendship. He must learn that the host or the hostess is obliged to take care of all the guests. Hence he, the host, must concentrate universally, not alone on the pretty little girls whom in unaccountable fashion he finds himself trailing; she, the hostess, must bestow her favour universally, not alone on the boy who for the moment has captured her admiring interest.

If more of this wide friendliness were taught to youngsters from the very start of their social life, we should not be afflicted by selfish adolescents and young people who won't go a step out of their way to dance with anyone but the belle of the ball or the hero of the hour.

SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

The leadership in the fun belongs to the host or the hostess, however young. Hence before the party the parents and the child can go over the games so that he knows just how they are played. He can be consulted beforehand on the seating of the guests at table, so that he will be able to indicate this arrangement when food is about to be served.

Stupid indeed are the parents who let their child sit in the corner while the party is taken over by alien hands. Pretty hopeless are the parents who let their child slip away from his own party to devote himself to just one of the guests or to some minor game or enthusiasm which cannot be shared by all the others. That is the kind of child who will, when he is adolescent, ride away in the family coupe and leave his own party flat while he spends the time with some transient enthusiasm.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Civilised dates are remembered in the well-mannered family.

This happy custom which the child sees around him from his first consciousness becomes part of his social nature. He is taught to remember birthdays. He becomes aware of the existence of anniversaries. In Catholic families his saint's name day is recalled. There are for himself small gifts and a minor celebration. He is part of these family celebrations, and he is trained to give gifts to the other members of the family at these times.

Quite aside from the charming customs, the practice of giving presents and the pleasant knowledge of how gracefully to receive them have been given the child. Both will make him a pleasanter person all through his life.

LETTER WRITING

Letter writing should of course be the routine practice of the parents. Then quite easily and early they can cultivate this manifestation of good manners in their children. Birthdays are remembered with letters; deaths are softened by letters of condolence. No gift is received without its being followed by a prompt note of thanks to the sender. After every visit, however brief, that the child makes, there is a bread-and-butter letter. Happy events like weddings and graduations are marked with a letter.

And in these cases, as in a thousand others, like parents, like children.

VOICES

Some people are by nature endowed with charming and easily modulated voices. Far more people have to cultivate this through long years of patient training. The civilised voices of the parents are the living demonstration to the children. Yet beyond that children can easily be trained to contro their voices and to develop a speaking timbre that is delightful to hear.

FORMULAS

Very early they must be taught the formulas necessary for civilised living and be made to use them.

When a child is introduced to his elders, everyone is acutely embarrassed if he stands with a finger in his mouth, pressed against the parental leg, and appearing as if in quest of a hole to crawl into. On the other hand we all instantly admire the child who accepts an introduction properly.

"How do you do, Mrs Jones? . . . Thank you; I am very well."

Apparently the old formulas, "I'm pleased to meet you" and "I'm happy to make your acquaintance," have been discarded as notably insincere. Similarly the abbreviation *ma'am* has been dropped in favour of the full name of the person. Indeed the use of names or titles should run through a child's conversation. Not, "What?" . . . "Wha'ja say?" . . . "Huh?" . . . "Yes, *ma'am*," but, "What did you say, Mrs Jones?" . . . "Thank you, Mrs Smith." . . . "Yes, Mr Brown." . . . "No, sir."

HANDLING PEOPLE

Children can early learn how to deal with strangers, how to handle bores who obtrude themselves. And if their later life is not to be complicated by the imposition of strangers, they are happy if they do know how to manage their fellow men.

COMPLIMENTS

The receiving of compliments and the paying of them are arts.

Little girls and boys who are paid compliments can go into a social tail spin, blush scarlet, look helplessly for an avenue of escape, and make the complimenter wish he'd never opened the subject. They can learn to say, simply, "Thank you very much," or "I'm glad you think so," or "You are very kind".

Much selfishness will be killed if they are trained to pay deserved compliments to their peers. "I think that is a pretty dress you have on . . . Good play! Well done!

attractive house you live in. . . I think your baby brother is very sweet."

All sorts of adults find themselves simply incapable of saying the kind, generous, complimentary things they really would like to say, because in their youth they were never trained to pay such compliments to those who deserved them.

Can it be overemphasised how all these things would improve our social living and make life pleasanter for all of us?

CARD GAMES

The home is the place where, under those natural teachers who are the parents, children can learn pleasant things like card playing and dancing.

All modern children should be taught the simple child card games. If they are taught, they later find the social card games easy to master. I honestly believe that the natural gambling instinct is released and controlled if children have played card games along with their earliest games. And certainly they will have mastered a pleasant and usually harmless form of social entertainment.

Card games in the family are a grand source of fun and union. They help the child to develop concentration combined with a quick sense of partnership. They prepare the child for social life. They are a simple school of applied psychology.

DANCING

In the same way the home is the natural dancing school.

I feel intensely sorry for a boy or a girl who has not been taught how to dance almost from the days he began to walk. At every gathering of young people with which I have been concerned, there has always been a desolate fringe of many boys

and a few girls who hang on the outskirts and make everyone uncomfortable. They are the boys and girls who never learned to dance. They watch the others with genuine envy. They are too old now and too self-conscious to take the leap.

I should be highly in favour of all children, both boys and girls, being sent to dancing school. Even if, like myself, they choose a career or enter a profession in which dancing is superfluous, the mastery they have gained over their feet makes them able to cross a lecture platform or even a sanctuary or a classroom with far less of a sinking feeling than they might otherwise have had. If however they remain "in the world", their mastery makes them better equipped for the normal social life, of which dancing is an integral part.

If parents cannot afford dancing school for their children, then the children should, as was mentioned before, learn to dance at home. Parents should start early to dance with their children. Brothers and sisters can dance together. The other children in the neighbourhood can be encouraged to drop in for an informal family dance. As I see it, the home is the place in which children, while they are avoiding the dangers of public dancing, are trained for their part in the delightful, sinless, and altogether charming social dancing that can well make pleasanter their whole social life.

BRASH OR SHY

Some children are by nature brash. They want to show off. If there is a party, they are far in the lead. When anything is going on, their voices rise piercingly or compellingly above the rest.

Some children are by nature shy. In company they are alarmed, and their voices shrink to a barely perceptible whisper.

They find it a torture to meet people. They cannot take the lead or stand in the centre of any space—platform or ballroom or stage or living room—without their wishing to high heaven that they could die.

Somewhere in between these two extremes is the civilised, well-mannered human being. The two extremes are almost equally bad. The brash are a nuisance to the rest of the world. The shy are a torture to themselves.

Parents can in their own homes do much to bring the two extremes somewhere near the ideal centre. The shy child can be encouraged to take his part, to perform when his turn comes, to face people or meet them or display what small talents God has given him and his training has developed. The brash child can be made to wait his turn, not to be eternally performing, to stand aside until others have first been introduced, not to thrust his acts in the face of any unprotected audience.

RESPECT FOR PRIVACY

The signs of good manners having been instilled in the child at home are many.

There is that beautiful characteristic which is respect for the privacy of others. Parents show that respect toward each other. They even display it toward their children. They insist that the children practise it among themselves.

Homes are limited monarchies, I insist. They are not little communisms. They are certainly not anarchies.

LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS

Hence in a well-mannered home letters and phone calls belong to the persons who receive them.

"Who called you up?... Who's that letter from?... What did he say?... My you were a long time on the phone! ...Who's that?"

Almost any of these queries is a small percussion cap that will set off a family explosion. As a plain fact almost no one but the parents has a right to ask these questions.

Parents should of course exercise a reasonable control over the letters and phone calls their children make and receive. This is merely part of the supervision they exercise over their children's friendships.

Yet between themselves husband and wife should set the example of a very dignified restraint. The wife has no right to open her husband's letters or to demand to know to whom he was talking on the phone. Nor has the husband any such privileges with regard to his wife. Hence the training of the children in their respect for domestic privacies begins with the parents' being most careful not to intrude on one another.

Parents should know who writes to their children. They ought to know whom their children are phoning. If the correspondence becomes too frequent and fervent, the parents can discreetly enter in. When the phoning reaches a point where it becomes almost impossible for the other members of the family to use the phone, simple good sense puts a stop to that.

Yet where the letters are obviously harmless, it is better for parents to pay their children the compliment of letting them open their own mail. Should they be rightly curious about the letters received, the parents can ask if they may read them. Only after the request has been refused or given with reluctance or embarrassment need they start to exercise their parental authority.

The children must be taught that among themselves mail is sacred and telephone conversations for the ears of those who take part in them. Mail may be freely shared if the recipient desires it. No one else has any right to intrude or demand. Phone messages may voluntarily be relayed or repeated. They should not be pried out of those who received them. There is much too much of this sort of thing in families:

"Who's that letter from? I recognised the handwriting on the envelope. That's the third you got this week from that person... Who called up? Gosh he talked a long time. What did he say?... Who're you writing to?... Are you calling that girl up again?"

This is essentially bad manners, to be suppressed sternly by the parents.

PRIVATE DRAWER AND CLOSET

Both boys and girls like their own closets and bureau or dresser drawers. They enjoy the feeling that these belong to them and that no one without their leave can pry into them. That is a reasonably human attitude and one that any of us should be quick to recognise and understand.

So if the house is large enough, the parents designate a closet as the child's very own. As long as he or she keeps it orderly and clean, it will not be bothered. Occasionally he or she will be asked to open it for parental inspection. For a closet found in good order, there are words of commendation. As a reward the child's privacy is respected more completely. If the closet is in a state of disorder, the child must be warned that this will mean the loss of his exclusive right to use it, since someone will have to take over the task of keeping it neat and clean and in proper array.

If an entire closet cannot be assigned to one child, then certain bureau or dresser drawers should be given him. Here again the child's rights to that drawer should be respected. Only crass disorder in the drawer should bring parental invasion of it.

Among the children in a family these places that belong to brothers or sisters should be in the line with Bluebeard's closet. They should be taught to respect others' privacy as they expect their own privacy to be respected. There can be few finer lessons in co-operation or good manners than this regard for the small private domains.

COLLECTIONS

Most children are born collectors. Boys and girls are alike in this. They are usually alike too in the relative secrecy with which they surround their particular hobbies. It may be that they harbour a suspicion that the elders will regard their collections with contempt. It may be that they are afraid that by parading them too much they will lose them. Whatever their reasons, they like to regard this hobby or collection as their own, something they can show to others only when they wish to do so, something that they can keep for themselves at all other times.

They will get a real lesson in good manners if their collection or hobby is treated with great good manners by the rest of the household. When they present their private museum for admiration, it should be respectfully and attentively admired. No one should scoff. No one should point out its obvious lacunae or inadequacy. When they are not in the mood to exhibit their collection, no one should demand a showing of it or without let or permission go prying around of his own accord.

It may well be that under certain circumstances parents have reason to suspect the too carefully locked closet, the drawer too watchfully guarded, or the collection not shown to anyone and visited by the collector only in great secrecy. In that case the parents should certainly find out if anything is wrong. *Good morals always take precedence over good manners.*

ELDERS AND YOUNGERS

Good manners in children are manifested almost equally in the respect they show their elders and the consideration they display toward the younger children in the family. It is lovely if children have been trained to stand when an older person enters the room, if they relinquish the more comfortable chair to their elder, if they say, "Please excuse me," when they pass in front of an elder, if they say, "I beg your pardon," after they have disturbed someone in any way, and if they seem pleased to be of service in small things.

In well-mannered families there is a hierarchy of ages. The children acquire greater privileges with advancing years. Yet the older ones pay the compliment of politeness to the children who are their juniors. They regard even little brother and sister as human beings with rights. They pay attention to little brother when he wants to talk. They let him have a place, even if it is distinctly a minor one, in their games. They take a friendly interest in his concerns, but only so far as he wants that interest.

As always it is the wise disposition of the parents which sweetly and happily regulates all this.

THE IDEAL PARENTS

NATURAL ASSET

There is hardly another natural asset that is of higher value than good manners. The person who is punctual and considerate knows the correct thing to say—and he says it; he has consideration for the rights and feelings of another; is often enough the adult who as a child under the watchful eyes of his parents practised these things at home. What finer natural endowment could parents transmit to their children? What could possibly make them more attractive at home more welcome beyond the family circle?

